

**ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATION – THE ROLE OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION.**

by

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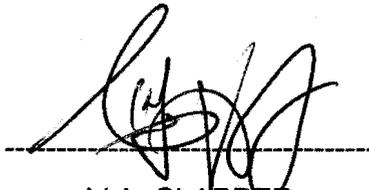
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JOINT PROMOTER: PROF JC PAUW

NOVEMBER 2000

DECLARATION

I declare that "ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATION – THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V.A. Clapper', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

V.A. CLAPPER

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DEDICATION

*To Lauren:
for encouragement,
for space,
for enthusiasm...*

You are my favourite person, ALWAYS!

SUMMARY

This thesis is premised upon the fact that any new government is faced with the difficult challenge of transforming the value system of the public service and incumbent public officials if that of the *ancien regime* is in conflict with its own. To achieve this, the new government invariably has to transform the latter in accordance with its new goals, value systems, and basic assumptions by introducing new laws and regulations alien to the experience of the inherited bureaucracy. This implies exacting discontinuous change, requiring particular attention to organisational culture, and not mere tinkering with organisational charts, salary parity and related matters.

The thesis finds that the interpretation of transformation currently endorsed by the *DPSA*, and other transformation partners falls short of taking sufficient cognisance of the importance of the organisational culture perspective, with the result that the transformation process to date evinces a minimal degree of success in relation to organisational culture change.

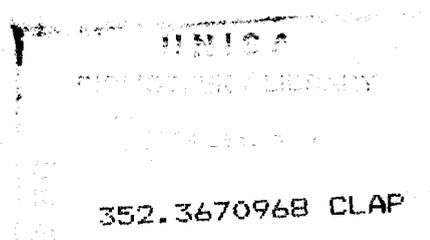
Evidence indicates that organisational culture is not sufficiently comprehended, defined, communicated, coordinated, or managed, due to the non-existence of feasible organisational culture change strategies or an adequately functioning maternal holding culture. This, accompanied by a lack of implementation of a national vision in relation to organisational culture change and a lack of political will in relation to organisational culture transformation, further stifles directed management and change of public service organisational culture.

Proposals for the improvement of the above situation are put forward. The most important of these is the establishment of an informed maternal holding culture, based on the mandate of Cabinet that the public service must be transformed in order to achieve *RDP* goals. Establishing a successful maternal holding culture requires the promotion of the comprehension of the organisational culture perspective, and clear communication and coordination of organisational culture and change strategies related thereto. This, in turn, demands, *inter alia*, the urgent building of management capacity in matters pertaining to organisational culture,

backed by political commitment and the fostering of a common vision that will provide the direction and values for a new organisational culture.

Key terms:

Organisational culture; Public service transformation; Maternal holding culture; Interpretive schemes; Logics of action; Second order change; Sub-cultures; Organisational climate; Department of Public Service and Administration; Basic assumptions; Values; Artefacts.



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ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSFORMATION – ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter of the thesis on transformation of the South African public service is to explain the reasons for undertaking this research. The extent of the study will also be explained in terms of at least three dimensions, viz., time dimension, geo-dimension, and hierarchical dimension.

Due to the nature of the subject that this research focuses on, it will be necessary to give an indication of the research methods that are employed, and also to explain some important concepts that will be utilised throughout the thesis in an effort to avoid ambiguity.

The reference technique applied in this research will be explained, and towards the end of the chapter an outline of the ensuing chapter will be provided for purposes of general orientation.

However, attention will first be turned to the identification and explanation of the problem of the thesis. This explication will also provide insight about the reasons why this study is undertaken, and offer some insights with regards to the avenues that the research will explore.

1.2 Statement of the problem

With the regime change that took place in South Africa in April 1994, the new government embarked on radical, discontinuous change or transformation of the public service. This transformation is premised upon the belief that transforming the public service will serve as catalyst for changing the South African society, since the public service is regarded as the government's most important instrument in normalising South African society (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:218). The transformation process currently underway has affected and is affecting every detail

of the public service; from principles of state organisation (such as federalism versus unitarism, and provincial and local government reorganisation) to rationalisation of government departments and changing of organisational structures, replacement of legal and regulatory frameworks, and many other aspects, some of which are addressed in this thesis. All these elements, and more, have been modified significantly within a relatively short period of time in order to position the new public service for the pursuit of the new values as articulated in the *Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP - South Africa 1994)* and the new *Constitutions (Act 200 of 1993, and Act 108 of 1996)* governing South Africa.

Since the need for public service transformation came about due to the fundamentally different ideological pursuits of the post 1994 government as opposed to the former government, it follows that the basic assumptions, attitudes and other traits of the public officials, particularly, but not exclusively, those inherited from the former eleven public services (see 6.2 *infra*) – which comprised fifteen discreet administrations - will need to be adapted in order to harmonise with the new values implied and required by the new ideological pursuits (*cf.* Mynhardt 1991: 9).

Since adoption of new values, basic assumptions and attitudes imply aspects comprehended in and explained by the organisational culture perspective, this thesis seeks to understand the relationship between public service transformation and organisational culture, and the impact of organisational culture on the transformation process. Against this background the following primary research problem may be stated:

Has much attention, if any, been given by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) (as primary driver of the public service transformation process) to the impact of organisational culture on public service transformation?

This primary problem statement implies several related, or secondary, problem statements, viz.:

What is the relationship between organisational culture and transformation?

How does the transformation process (understood as second order, discontinuous change), impact (if at all) on the organisational culture?

Does transformation of the public service automatically cause the public service organisational culture to change? If so, than to what extent?

What is the influence of organisational culture on transformation (the latter being understood as discontinuous or second order change)?

In order to investigate the primary and related problems, it is important to clearly articulate how, public service transformation and organisational culture are understood and utilised in the South African context and in this thesis. In order to achieve this, a qualitative approach to the research will be taken, based on the reasons elucidated below (see 1.5 *infra*).

1.3 Originality and relevance

The awareness of the organisational culture perspective among public officials and academics relative to the developments in organisation theory and practice can be described as relatively new and still surfacing (see 2.2 *infra*), with the result that the organisational culture is not always correctly understood, and often simply ignored, ill defined, or inappropriately managed. The latter is, for example, evident in the limited definition and comprehension of the perspective in the *DPSA*, and among other drivers of the public service transformation process (see 6.9 *infra*).

This research shows that a proper understanding of organisational culture, particularly as it relates to public service transformation, will contribute positively towards the better management and success of the transformation process. It will aid change managers in better understanding the complexities of the transformation process, as well as how to deal optimally with these complexities. The organisational culture perspective makes it clear that successful transformation should not only, or even primarily, be about the transformation of organisational

structures, amalgamation, or salary parity, but more fundamentally, about pursuing a common vision, changing basic assumptions, interpretive schemes and logics of action.

In doing research for this thesis, it also became evident that little effort has been spent in understanding the organisational culture perspective within the South African context. While the construct is often used in discussions and even publications, content- and discourse analyses of the South African context (*cf.* Potter 1996: 125-140; Gill 1996: 141-158) often reveal a lack of full comprehension (see 6.9 *infra*). Research undertaken by Daffue (1989) focussed on discovering and describing the organisational culture of local government within the South Africa context. The latter, while limited in its scope, was, as far as could be traced up to 1996 (when research for this thesis was commenced), the most comprehensive attempt to understand and apply the organisational culture perspective within the South African public sector.

The current research, then, should at the very least, contribute towards placing the organisational culture perspective on the public service transformational and organisational agenda for serious discussion and consideration in day-to-day management of the public service. This will be important since most of the transformation priorities apply to all public sector departments (see 1.7.6; 4.5.1.2, & 6.8 *infra*), and they hold radical organisational culture implications (see 4.5.1.2, 4.10, 6.8 & table 6.4 *infra*).

The further relevance of the organisational culture perspective to South African public service transformation becomes apparent upon the realisation that organisational culture is a *sine qua non* of transformation. These and additional aspects of the organisational culture perspective are dealt with in this thesis.

1.4 Frame of reference

While the present research focuses on the influence of organisational culture on the transformation of the South African public service, the manifestation and impact of

these variables are considered within a particular *locus* and *focus*. The implied borders of the latter have to be defined in terms of the thesis.

1.4.1 Locus of the research

Since the Minister for the Public Service and Administration has been designated the primary overseer, coordinator, and driver of the transformation of the public service on behalf of the Cabinet and Parliament (South Africa 1995: 6.1.1), and since a departmental infrastructure has been created, viz., the *DPSA*, through which the Minister performs the stated functions (Skweyiya 1996; South Africa 1995: 6.1.1), this thesis focuses on the role of the *DPSA* in the transformation process. The thesis focuses more specifically, on the attention that the *DPSA* gave to applying the organisational culture perspective in the transformation process. It needs to be emphasised that the *DPSA* performs its tasks and responsibilities in conjunction with, and on behalf of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration, who, in turn, is responsible to Cabinet and Parliament for overseeing the transformation process (see 4.5.1.3, 6.3, 6.4.1& 6.7 *infra*).

It should be noted that the White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service (South Africa 1995) refers to the Office of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (OMPSA), a department created in terms of the Public Service Act (1994) in order to assist the Minister of the Public Service and Administration in enabling and facilitating the transformation of the public service (South Africa 1997c: 6.1.1). The *DPSA* was established to replace the *OMPSA* after the transfer of the executive and policy formulation functions of the Public Service Commission to the Minister for the Public Service and Administration and other line function Ministers (see 6.3 *infra*; Skweyiya 1996; South Africa 1996: 3; Vil-Nkomo 1996: Interview). Any reference, therefore, to the *OMPSA* will, for purposes of this thesis, be deemed a reference to the *DPSA*.

1.4.2 Time frame

The time frame that this investigation covers is 1994 – 1999. The choice of this period is determined by at least two factors, viz.;

- i. While the basis for the current transformation of the South African public service, and hence the transformation of the South African society, was set during the early part of the nineteen nineties decade (see 5.2.2.2 *infra*), the actual transformation of the public service had its foundation in the antecedent and parallel process of the rationalisation of the public service (see 4.5.2, 6.2 & 6.4 *infra*). The rationalisation process, commenced with the proclamation of the new *Public Service Act* on 3 June 1994 (see 6.2 *infra*). For these reasons 1994 is also regarded as the *terminus a quo* of the transformation process currently underway in the South African public service.
- ii. The choice of 1999 as the *terminus ad quem* is based upon the official transfer of the presidency from President Nelson Mandela to Mr Thabo Mbeki in June 1999 (Granelli 1999:1; Randall 1999: 13). Along with this change a reshuffle of Cabinet was introduced, which saw a change in Ministers in; among other Ministries, the Ministry of the Department of Public Service and Administration from Dr Z Skweyiya to Ms G Fraser-Moleketi (Brand 1999:1; Rantao 1999: 13). Since the introduction of the new Minister saw the introduction of a “new” set of transformation priorities (see 4.9.1 viii *infra*) that differ somewhat from that of Minister Skweyiya, it would serve the purposes of this thesis better to, for the most part, focus on the tenure of Minister Skweyiya and the transformation processes undertaken during his tenure.

1.5 Research methodologies employed

Xenikou and Furnham (1996: 349) point out that organisational culture research has traditionally relied almost exclusively, but certainly preferentially, on qualitative methods (see 2.2.2 *infra*). Jreisat (1997: 180) asserts that “cultural analysis requires disciplined exploration and observation, effective interviewing, discovery of critical

incidents, and informed comparisons”, all of which are methods of research related to ethnography (*cf.* 2.5 *infra*). Ethnography can be described as a traditional method of Cultural Anthropology and Sociology that involves the study of people performing activities and interacting in complex social settings in order to obtain a qualitative understanding of these interactions (McCleverty 1997:Online; *cf.* Toren 1996: 102; Objectivity, Ethnographic insight ... : Online).

As one of the most prolific researchers and world-renowned authors and commentators on the organisational culture perspective, Schein (cited by Rousseau 1990:161) is of the opinion that quantitative assessments conducted through surveys are “... unethical in that it reflects conceptual categories not the respondent’s own”, presuming unwarranted generalisability. In researching Knowledge Management as related to traditional medicine among traditional medicine practitioners in South Africa, Augusto (1999; 2000: Interview) found concurring evidence. She also concluded that quantitative methods reveal basic assumptions that are those of the researcher and not that of the respondents (Augusto 1999; *cf.* Toren 1996: 102) .

Schein (1986: 80-83), for example, alleges that the most important level of organisational culture, viz., basic assumptions, which exist at a preconscious level (see 2.10.3 *infra*), can best be traced “through a complex interactive process of joint inquiry between insiders and outsiders.” In agreement with Schein, Owens and Steinhoff (1989:6) affirm that the researcher in organisational culture can only benefit by working along with individuals who are seen as insiders of the organisation that serves as the subject of the research. The principle they reiterate emphasises the gathering of research data by employing ethnographic techniques of observation and interviewing, and through careful content and discourse analyses of relevant documents (*cf.* Potter 1999, Gill 1999; Wessels 1999: 389-392).

There is a dearth in both quantitative and qualitative research on the organisational culture perspective in South Africa. An example of organisational culture research within the South African context is that undertaken by Daffue (1989). The latter research focussed on organisational culture in local government, examining an existing organisational culture within local government structures by utilising quantitative questionnaires. The current research, however, focuses on the

transformation process currently underway in the South African public service, indicating the transformation of one public service organisational culture to another (see 4.10 *infra*). Since the new public service organisational culture is in the process of being transformed, formed and established, and since exploratory evidence indicated a lack of awareness and understanding of the organisational culture perspective in the public service (*cf.* 6.9 *infra*), a qualitative research approach seemed more appropriate than quantitative techniques for purposes of the current research. The latter conclusion is based squarely on the established convention in organisational culture research as argued above, taken in conjunction with the nature of organisational culture data available within the South African context, plus the careful, objective consideration of the nature of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

The choice of research methodology does not serve as a denigration of quantitative methodologies. As Hammersley (1996: 160f) points out, it would be foolhardy to place quantitative and qualitative methodologies in tension one with the other, since they are both valid methodologies. Hence, distinguishing between the two methodologies on simplistic grounds such as *numerical versus verbal data, numbers versus words, hard data versus rich data*, misses the point of valid research, since these distinctions do not, *prima facie*, guarantee construct validity. Qualitative research recognises that "(a)dequate precision may not always require the use of numbers" (Hammersley 1996: 163), since there are many aspects in society that do not lend itself to quantification according to classical scientific methodologies. This realisation concurs with the findings of Schein (Rousseau 1990: 161, 162; Jreisat 1997: 180; Toren 1996: 102), and was also confirmed by the evaluation of research in organisational culture undertaken in preparation for the current research.

The preparatory research for this thesis further indicated that the "building blocks" of the new public service organisational culture were serendipitously being articulated during the period covered in this research (see chapter six). There were thus no evident "pre-established truths" (*cf.* Leedy & Ormrod 2001: 35, 102 & 103; *cf.* 34), hence *inductive* and *heuristic* approaches were deemed the best approaches that would provide satisfactory answers to the questions raised by research of this nature. The result of this inductive investigation was the identification of certain

distinctive themes, such as the evident relationship between organisational culture and transformation, amongst others. Following this, a more deductive approach was applied in order to verify, and at times modify, the initial findings. This was achieved through triangulating the initial findings with additional data in the form of primary and secondary documents.

The research tools utilised, then, were interviews, content analyses of public service departmental reports, relevant literature on the organisational culture perspective, transformation practice, and other related topics, official statements, and media releases and statements by change agents within the public sector and government, policy documents and other relevant legislation. Some of these are further explained below.

1.5.1 Interviews, official documents, and other sources utilised

Open-ended, in depth, qualitative interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders (*cf.* Leedy & Ormrod 2001: 102; see 6.1), particularly members of the Transformation Unit of the *DPSA*, the pre-transformed Public Service Commission (see 6.2.1 & 6.3 *infra*), and the Portfolio Committee on the Public Service. These interviews were conducted over the period August 1996 to September 1998. Additional interviews, based upon the requirements of the research project were also undertaken. These are appropriately cited and credited in the text of the thesis. The interviews were preceded by extensive literature evaluations and reviews on transformation and organisational culture issues in order to establish a solid theoretical premise for the rest of the research. In so doing, a valid framework for the analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary source materials was obtained (*cf.* Potter 1999; Gill 1999).

Preliminary interviews with the aim of establishing the feasibility of the intended research were undertaken during 1994 and 1995, but semi-structured, open ended, interviews were undertaken during 1996, 1997, and 1998. The questions explored during the interviews were determined by the careful reading of organisational culture and transformation literature, South African public service transformation and

related documentation, and formal and informal discussions¹ and observation relating to organisational culture and transformation. The questionnaire that comprises *annexure 1* of this thesis resulted, but was applied in an unstructured fashion, mainly using it to guide discussions and interviews. For this purpose, and upon the request of the interviewees, the questionnaire (*annexure 1*) was submitted to the interviewees a few days before the actual interviews. This allowed them to prepare for the interviews. Some of the interviews were recorded on tape, but all were carefully transcribed. Along with field notes, these interviews served to inform the writing of, and the conclusions reflected in this thesis.

1.5.1.1 Excess to pertinent documentation

An important result of the interviews conducted at the *DPISA* in particular is that access was provided to important materials such as Ministerial speeches and press releases, and other documentation important to the purposes of this thesis, which might have been inaccessible if the interviews had not been undertaken.

1.5.1.2 Observation and discourse analyses

Close observation of the transformation process, and careful content and discourse analyses of the interviews, policies and legislation relating to transformation and implying organisational culture were done throughout the period covered by this research². The discourse analyses primarily comprised the careful reading of relevant texts, while being aware of the fact that texts may be interrogated differently by different researchers (*cf.* Hammersley 1996: 160*f*). Caution was particularly necessary in this regard. Texts, such as official documentation, memoranda, speeches and media releases, were carefully read, coded, categorised, and analysed in an effort to trace patterns, and then re-categorised, and interpreted in terms of relevance to the concerns of the research. The results produced allowed the drawing of pertinent conclusions.

1.5.2 Validation through triangulation

The validity of the conclusions drawn was affirmed by means of triangulating the results of the interview data with the results produced by the discourse analyses as well as the content analyses of the other sources mentioned above. Details of the sources are clearly cited in the text of the thesis and accredited appropriately in the list of sources (see 8.0 *infra*).

The utilisation and interpretation of the research methodologies applied were further validated by careful comparison with the vast array of materials on transformation theory and practice, the organisational culture perspective, and other related topics (see chapter 3 in particular) in book, journal and web-page format. This is clearly reflected in the list of sources (see 8.0 *infra*).

Collectively all the mentioned activities served to inform the ethnomethodological approach to the research.

1.6 Reference technique

The shortened Harvard reference technique (Roux 1989: 5) was deemed most appropriate for purposes of this research. At times, however, it was important to provide additional information on the subject matter treated at any given point. This additional information is then provided in endnotes where presenting the information in the text would interfere with the flow of argumentation. Such footnote referencing was kept to a minimum.

A comprehensive list of sources, duly accredited, is provided at the end of the thesis. Following the list of sources, additional information relating to the study is provided in the form of annexures. These are clearly referred to in the text where appropriate.

1.7 Terminological clarification

Kerlinger (1985: 3) points out that in order to understand any complex human activity it is important to grasp the language and approach of individuals who pursue it. Social scientific research invariably utilises words the meaning of which may be unclear or ambiguous if not contextually defined and explained beforehand. This section focuses on the explanation of some concepts that might fall prey to being misunderstood if not treated here. Since some of the constructs and related phenomena germane to this research require more than just a brief explanation, chapters two and three are dedicated specifically to those. The concepts that will briefly be treated here are: *transformation*, *reform*, *rationalisation*, *organisational culture*, *maternal holding culture*, *public service*, and *public sector*. Other relevant concepts and phenomena will be explained and defined at the points of relevance in the text.

1.7.1 Transformation

Singh (1992: 49) notes, "through its frequent use, transformation is acquiring, contradictorily, both an obviousness and a mysteriousness that is making it into a rather slippery notion." Any consideration of the concept *transformation* is bound to discover that it is generally used to describe any change process, but particularly discontinuous or second order change (see 4.11 *infra*). Transformational strategies apply when an organisation is markedly out of fit with its ambient environment, or when the environment changes dramatically. For the organisation to survive, "fit must be achieved by more discontinuous change processes" (Dunphy & Stace 1988: 321).

The latter assertion is representative of the major tenets found in most writers on change and reform, viz., that revolutionary change, or transformation, is necessary when a relatively stable environment becomes turbulent, or when major elements of organisational functioning do not fit with the ever-changing environment and require substantial alignment.

The South African and world environment has been, and is, transforming at a pace that compelled discontinuous breaks with the past. Some reasons for transformation nationally and internationally are provided and treated in chapter 4 (see 4.2 & 4.3 *infra*) and throughout the thesis.

In an effort to locate *transformation* clearly within the South African political-administration arena, Singh (1992:57) suggests two related definitions of the concept, viz.:

“Transformation could be understood as the maximum utilisation of new political space to push the struggle for popular participation and empowerment further”, and,

“It could be viewed as the opportunity to insert progressive constituencies into positions where, through contestation with ruling bloc forces, they could intervene in the struggle to shape the South Africa of the future.”

Singh’s definitions of transformation reflect the important link between the phenomenon and the context in which it is applied. Given the South African context, public sector transformation is more about politics than about management *per se* (see 4.4 *infra*). While transformation in developed countries has as primary goal the transformation of public sectors into effective implements of government for the serving of society, the transformation goals within South African government and public service, although also pursuing similar goals, is in the first place an effort to change South African society and public service towards democratic inclusiveness as opposed to the exclusiveness of the former government and public service (see 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4 *infra*).

Transformation is used in this thesis to refer to radical second order or discontinuous change (see 4.9.1, 4.11.1.1 ii *infra*). Within the context of the South African public service transformation process, *transformation* is explained as being:

“... a dynamic, focussed and relatively short term process, designed to fundamentally reshape the public service for its appointed role in the new dispensation in South Africa” (South Africa 1995: 1.2).

The latter explanation of transformation can be better understood in relation to other related phenomena, such as *reform* and *rationalisation*.

1.7.2 Reform

Huntington (cited in Müller & van der Walt 1998: 44) defines reform as “... a change in the direction of greater social, economic or political equality, a broadening of participation in society and polity.” For Thornhill (1994:52) reform refers to the process or procedure of becoming better by removing or abandoning imperfections, faults or errors.” In agreement with the latter definition, the World Bank (1991: 2) describes reform as “containing the growth of and costs of government and making the civil service more efficient and effective”. Except for the political element that is not overtly mentioned, the similarity between the definitions of reform and of transformation above are obvious, both referring to change from one situation that is judged untenable to one that is judged more favourable. In this regard the aspect of the scope of the change need to be taken into account. This and related matters are focused upon in chapter 4 (see 4.11 *infra*).

Within the South African context, reform would require that particular attention be devoted to “policy making processes, organisational structures, personnel matters as well as managerial issues” but particularly the important matter of attitude reform among public officials (Thornhill 1994: 52). Since attitudes and values upon which these attitudes are based are important building blocks of organisational culture (see 2.9 & 2.1 *infra*), the aspect of attitude reform will be raised at 6.6 *infra*.

In chapter 5 *infra* reform is focused upon in more detail.

1.7.3 Rationalisation

Robson (1994:223-226) points out that rationalisation has been mandated as the process whereby the system of South African public administration is to move from the old order or dispensation to the new. Rationalisation, then, means to organise reasonably and economically; to reorganise scientifically; to organise with a view to achieving efficiency and economy (*cf.* Hilliard & Wissink 1996: 77 & 78). "Rationalisation is in fact a continuous, rarely finalised, process which assists administrative systems to adapt to change" (Hilliard & Wissink 1996:, 77 & 78; Van der Walt & Helmbold 1995: 112). The spirit of the latter definitions and explanations is reflected in the contextual explication of rationalisation at 4.5.2 *infra*.

1.7.4 Organisational Culture / organisational culture

Many definitions of the organisational culture perspective are in existence. A selection of existing definitions are analysed in chapter two (2.9 *infra*), and one is selected for purposes of this thesis, along with cogent reasons as to why the particular definition is selected (2.9 *infra*). However, a historical overview of the development of Organisational Culture within the context of organisation theory is first provided (see 2.2.1.7 *infra*), and the different components of the definition of the perspective are explained (see 2.9 & 2.10 *infra*). Here the definition adopted for this thesis is presented:

Organisational culture is defined as: "a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein 1990: 111).

Organisational culture is a multi-faceted variable that cannot be easily isolated, measured, and manipulated, nor is it a concrete act that can be observed and monitored with the exact precision required by natural scientists or positivists. As Jreisat states: "Cultural elements in the workplace are ubiquitous; culture touches

every aspect of operations and people.” In light of the latter organisational culture is understood in this thesis as having many consequences, of which the most significant is probably its momentous impact on people in terms of the establishment of a consensus on standards of conduct and rules of operations that allow new employees (in terms of this thesis, public officials) to interact successfully when joining the public service. In light of this organisational culture can simply be defined, according to Muchinsky (1993: 270) as “the way we do things ‘round here”. Organisational culture “separates acceptable from unacceptable values; it sanctions and punishes; and, ... cannot be ignored with impunity” (Jreisat 1997:188). Chapter two sets out to contextualise the development of the theory of organisational culture, to provide an explication of the adopted definition, and to further explain the construct and the phenomenon.

In this thesis organisational culture as a theoretical construct will be presented with capital **O** and **C** in order to distinguish between it and organisational culture as a phenomenon. Reference to “the organisational culture perspective” will serve the same purpose as reference to “Organisational Culture” in the same way that reference to “public administration theory” is synonymous with “Public Administration”.

1.7.5 Maternal holding culture.

Since the *DPSA* is required to serve as the primary driver and coordinator of the public service transformation process (see South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1), it has placed a heavy focus on articulating the values and ideologies of the new South Africa, as expressed in the *RDP* and the *South African Constitutions* (1993 and 1996; cf. South Africa 1997c: chapter 4, 2.4; see chapter 6 *infra*) in the form of policies and legislation. Seen in this light the *DPSA* can also be seen as the main culture carrier, since it, by virtue of its position as main transformation overseer, driver, and coordinator (South Africa 1995: 6.1.1) is also expected to transmit the new culture and values of the new public service to other departments (cf. Jabes and Zussman 1989: 99). As such the *DPSA* is required to establish a maternal holding culture³ in

relation to national and provincial departments of the public service, that, in turn, serve as sub-cultures (see 3.2 *infra*) of the maternal holding culture.

The tasks of the maternal holding culture would, among others, entail:

- i. Transmission of values and basic assumptions to sub-cultures.
- ii. Assuring the adoption of the values and basic assumptions that it transmits.
- iii. Creating and maintaining harmony between itself and the sub-culture departments without coercing the sub-cultures to exist as perfect clones of itself, but rather to enable sub-cultures to develop their own cultures within the framework of the central or dominant culture as interpreted, espoused, and propagated by the maternal holding culture.
- iv. Enabling and maintaining consistency and harmony between itself and the sub-cultures by providing vision and articulating and inculcating concomitant shared values so as not to work and function at cross purposes with each other, but to be committed to, and to pursue common values essential for achieving common goals or shared frameworks. “(W)here that shared framework is missing, a fundamental basis for collective action is lost” (Rosell 1999: 46).

The national and provincial departments, relating to the *DP*SA maternal holding culture as sub-cultures, are likely to develop their own cultures and internal sub-cultures by virtue of, among other things, their peculiar line and/or auxiliary functions, required expertise and professionalism, and geographical distance to the maternal holding culture, but these should not be inconsistent with the maternal holding culture (see 2.11 *infra*, *cf.* 3.6.2 *infra*). Therefore, the function of the maternal holding culture among other things, would be to create frameworks “regarding public service organisation and structuring that will allow for both appropriate uniformity and adequate differentiation at the same time (South Africa 1999/2000 Online; *cf.* 5.5 *infra*).

1.7.6 Public service and public sector

Within the South African context, the public service is defined as distinct from the public sector. The public sector comprises the public service as well as local government, many statutory bodies, parastatals, quasi-government institutions, and similar bodies. The *Public Service Review Report* (South Africa 1999/2000: Online 1.1) asserts: "it is ... for the elected government of the day, as the acknowledged representative of the people, to give concrete direction and shape to the public service at any point in time. ... (T)here is no question that (the public service) must always and everywhere represent and execute the will of the government."

The public service, according to the *Public Service Act* (South Africa 1994: 8 (1)(a)), consists of persons who hold posts on the fixed establishment in the police, health, education, National Intelligence Services, and other general public services. It should be emphasised that the public service excludes both local government and public enterprises, while, as stated above, the public sector comprises the public service, local government, public enterprise, parastatals, quasi-governmental institutions, and similar bodies.

1.8 Summary and sequence of chapters

The thesis was inspired by the question of whether organisational culture will impact upon the transformation of the South African public service. Chapter one argues for the relevance of this question, and the contribution that the insights resulting from such research could make to the transformation underway in the South African public service, and to transformation in general. Chapter two focuses on establishing the importance of the organisational culture perspective, tracing the historical development thereof, analysing various definitions, and finally adopting a functional definition for purposes of this thesis. Organisational culture cannot be analysed without becoming aware of its multifaceted- and multidimensional nature. It can only be researched or managed optimally against a background of the latter acknowledgement. With the preceding in mind, chapter three seeks to identify and

explain constructs and related phenomena important to the proper understanding of the organisational culture perspective.

The foundation provided by chapters two and three allows for turning to an explication of transformation in chapter four, considering the transforming global environment, and, within this framework, defining and explicating transformation within the South African public service context. This chapter also gives attention to the transformation process and the relationship between organisational culture and public service transformation. Transformation of the South African public service is also contextually described as inextricably related to the rationalisation of the public service.

Having established that organisational culture is a *sine qua non* for successful transformation, chapter five focuses on a historico-political analysis of the source(s) of the organisational culture of the public service that needs to be transformed, viz., the apartheid state. This consideration is informed by the established convention among governments to use public services as implements through which they endeavour to achieve their ideological goals and execute their policies. It considers the origin of the value systems that drove the erstwhile public service, as well as the reforms of the eras before and after 1990. Reasons explaining the need for transformation are underscored, and organisational culture aspects are highlighted.

In an effort to answer the research problem, chapter six focuses specifically on the transformation process in the South African public service since 1994, but emphasises organisational culture aspects and the influence, if any, these aspects exert upon the transformation of the public service. In chapter seven salient conclusions are drawn and possible solutions are identified.

1.9 End notes

¹ The informal and formal discussions took place throughout the period of the research, either virtually via email, or personally. Such discussions were conducted with colleagues, national and international experts on Organisation Theory and Organisational Culture. Two international experts that should be mentioned are Professor Edgar Schein, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), Cambridge, Massachusetts, who was communicated with via email, and Professor Geri Augusto, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, via email and personally. Professor Schein is an internationally renowned expert, and prolific author and opinion former on the organisational culture perspective.

² It was significant that most of the policy and legislative documents cited in this research were submitted by the interviewees in response to the interview questions. Experience reported by departments on national and provincial levels of government indicates that the Department of Public Service and Administration (*DPSA*) primarily generated and provided policy documents in response to their questions on what they ought to do with regards to transformation in their departments (see 6.10 *infra*). Evidently little direct procedural direction was provided.

³ Maternal holding culture as explained here has its private sector equivalent in the concept of "parent company." The departments that serve as sub-cultures to the maternal holding culture have their private sector equivalents in the units established by the parent company, and are likely to be geographically removed from the parent company for purposes of local service delivery.

CHAPTER TWO: SURVEYING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE - IN PURSUIT OF AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

2.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this thesis is to examine the role that organisational culture is likely to play, and the influence it is likely to exercise upon the transformation of the South African public service as coordinated, driven and overseen by the *DPSA*. In pursuit of these stated ends, defining the phenomena will be essential. Therefore, it will be the goal of this chapter to provide an operational definition of organisational culture applicable to the public service. While reference will be made to transformation throughout, it will be specifically defined and explicated in chapter four (see 4.5 *infra*; cf. 1.7.1 *supra*).

While establishing criteria for defining Organisational Culture, effort will also be made to situate the organisational culture perspective within the context of transformation. This effort will be informed by the theoretical premises inherent in the construct.

The intent of this chapter of necessity dictates a theoretical perspective. Because of this imperative a representative sample of the current literature on Organisational Culture will therefore be identified, and, by means of the investigative approach, be analytically appraised. The latter will help towards the understanding of the functions and contents of organisational culture, and hence it will facilitate the search for an operational conceptualisation and articulation of the construct and other related constructs.

Attention will first be turned to the historical development of the understanding of organisational culture as a construct in an effort to determine the position of the phenomenon within organisational theory, and to determine whether that the organisational culture perspective is a useful, perhaps indispensable, one within

organisational studies in general, and in the transformation process in particular.

2.2 Historical development of the organisational culture perspective

A brief review of the development of the awareness of Organisational Culture, as well as of the attitudes of organisational theorists towards the phenomenon, will aid towards understanding the need for an urgent inclusion thereof, and all that it entails, in public administration research and theory in pursuit of an improved and growing understanding and usefulness of the subject.

To the latter end some of the dominant schools of organisation theory will briefly be reviewed relative to their major tenets. An effort will then be made to ascertain how these major themes have influenced the development of the organisational culture perspective. The aim with this brief treatment of the historical development of the organisational theories, therefore, is not to deliberate upon it in any detail, but rather to highlight the basic tenets of the various approaches in an effort to bring elements of organisational culture to the surface.

Any effort to understand the advent and development of organisation theory is challenged by the reality that there are different views about the best way to group organisation theories (*cf.* Roux, Brynard, Botes & Fourie 1996:17-32; Hodge, Anthony & Gales 1996:19-24; Bounds, Dobbins & Fowler 1995:40-73; Henry 1995:52-80; Scott 1961:7-26). While each of the major perspectives of organisation theory is supposedly associated with a particular period, there is no general agreement about when one begins and when the other ends. For example, Roux *et al.* (1996:17) state that the classical approach of organisation theory covers the general period +/-1900-1920, while it is Ott's (1989:141) opinion that the classical theory was in vogue in the decades of the 1920's and the 1930's.

What is evident, however, is that the time frames of the various perspectives on organisational theory overlap, one experiencing dominance while the other wanes. Evidently, the principles that characterise one school of thought invariably influenced the principles of subsequent schools of thought, either by contrast or elaboration. It is an awareness of the latter fact that alerts to the possibility of tracing the development of the organisational culture perspective in preceding schools of organisation theory.

Certain caveats must, however, be stated when the development of organisation theory is considered.

- i. As intimated above, it is not possible to discover a single or specific date as the beginning of serious deliberative thought about how organisations work, and how they should be structured and managed. Organisation theorists point out that ancient accounts from Egyptian-, Jewish-, and Greek history provide evidence of advanced understanding of how organisations function (Hodge *et al.* 1996:19; Bounds *et al.* 1995:45, 46). Aristotle, for example, was ostensibly the first to write of the importance of culture to management systems (Ott 1989:146). Modern theory of organisations can, however, be traced to the 18th century Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.
- ii. The societal cultural values serve as the context in which organisation theory developed, and the latter developments are reflections of the values of a particular era. Hence during the Industrial Revolution humans were regarded, not as organisational citizens, but as the interchangeable parts of industrial machines (Wren 1972:13; Hodge *et al.* 1996:20), while the current era is characterised by an almost universal insistence on the recognition of human rights.
- iii. Organisation theorists learn from, and build upon, the assumptions, logic, and research findings of antecedent organisation theorists; either by adoption, adaptation, further elaboration and explication, or by rejection. Contribution towards the development of any subsequent perspectives, therefore, will reflect nuances of preceding perspectives, or develop in a contrasting manner. Upon

reflection, therefore, it will become clear that, to a smaller or larger extent, successive perspectives are bound to reveal influences of preceding perspectives.

2.2.1 Major approaches in organisation theory

For purposes of this review the main approaches in organisation theory that inspired the development of the organisational culture perspective will follow the taxonomy of Ott (1989:144); viz.:

- Classical organisation theory;
- The "classical philosophers";
- Neoclassical organisation theory;
- The human relations perspective;
- "Modern" structural organisation theory;
- The systems and contingency perspective; and
- The power and politics perspective.

These approaches in organisation theory will briefly be discussed in the ensuing section.

2.2.1.1 Classical organisation theory (+/-1776-1945)

While the classical perspective or approach dominated organisation theory into the 1930's, it continues to exercise an influence (Ott 1989: 146, Robbins 1987:4). Approaches that can be classified under this rubric are the Scientific Management approach of Frederick W Taylor, the Administrative Theories approach of Henry Fayol and others, and Max Weber's bureaucratic approach (Henry 1995:53; Bounds *et al.* 1995:46-52).

The primary tenets of the classical approach, also known as the closed model of organisation are (Bounds *et al* 1995:47-52; Henry 1995:53-57; Roux *et al.* 1996:19-25):

- i. There is one best method to organise for optimum production, and that method can be discovered through systematic scientific inquiry;
- ii. There exist at least fourteen universally applicable managerial principles; and
- iii. Production can be maximised through specialisation and division of labour.

A major criticism against the classical approach is that it fails to give adequate attention to the human side of organisation. For this reason the basic tenets of the classical approach in organisation theory have almost nothing in common with the tenets of the organisational culture perspective (see 2.2.1.7; 2.9 *infra*), except that the primary focus of both is to understand how organisations function. The organisational culture perspective rejects the assumption that there is one best way to manage or organise, or that administrative principles can be rigidly applied without considering context and needs. In light of this Ott (1989:147, 148) indicates that Organisational Culture does not subscribe to the relevance of the scientific method of the classical approach to the functioning of organisations.

2.2.1.2 Classical philosophers (+/-1920-1945)

A class of so-called classical philosophers were active during the 1920's and 1930's, who challenged the basic tenets of the classical school of organisation theory (Blau 1968: 301; Ott 1989:148-149). They particularly contested the "one best method" of classical organisation theory, and questioned the ability of the method of scientific inquiry to discover the said method.

In place of the "one best method" the classical philosophers advanced that the important issues that mattered for proper functioning of organisations were the values

and behavioural norms of organisation members, informal relationships, intrinsic motivation, and self-esteem (Ott 1989:148, 149).

In this class Chester Barnard (Shafritz & Hyde 1992:96-100; *cf* Rainey 1997:37, 38) made the most significant contribution to the organisational culture perspective by contending that the most critical function of a chief executive officer was to establish and communicate a system of organisational values and norms to organisation members. He therefore emphasised the important symbolic role of the leader. Consequently, while Barnard did not use the words "organisational culture", it is evident that he clearly understood and emphasised the importance of group cultural norms, values and beliefs for the functioning of organisations. It will be shown (see 2.9 *infra*) that proponents of the organisational culture perspective have employed some of the most important concepts of Organisational Culture, namely norms and values, in the same manner as did Chester Barnard. So, too, the important role of the organisational leader in the establishment of these norms and values (see chapter 4.9.1, 6.7 & 6.9 *infra*, Wessels 2000: 320, 321).

2.2.1.3 Neoclassical organisation theory (1945-1978)

The outstanding contribution of the neoclassical perspective is that it introduced modifications based on empirical scientific findings to the much-maligned classical perspective (*cf.* Roux *et al.* 1996:25). The broad approaches that can be identified under the neoclassical organisation theory are the human relations and human potential movements, and the behavioural systems or behavioural sciences school, including the motivation theories (Bounds *et al.* 1995:52-56; Ott 1989:149; Roux *et al.* 1996:25-27). It should be noted that the scientific approach was more a characteristic of the behavioural sciences school than it was of the human relations and human potential movements (Bounds *et al.* 1995:55, 56).

Neoclassical theorists aimed at describing interpersonal and human behaviour in organisational context, and in so doing focussed on the analysis of the informal dimension of organisational manifestations (Roux *et al.* 1996:25). Some important theorists and researchers that made important contributions to the development of the neoclassical movement are FJ Roethlisberger and WJ Dickson, E Mayo, CI Barnard, H Simon, D McGregor and F Herzberg (Bounds *et al.* 1995:52-56; Roux *et al.* 1996:25).

Mayo and associates, for example, through a series of scientific experiments, known as the Hawthorne studies, found (Ott 1989: 152; Bounds *et al.* 1995: 53, 54; Roux *et al.* 1996:25, 26):

- i. that organisations also have a social facet, and that personal attention that employees receive on the job (the Hawthorne effect, *cf.* Henry 1995:58, 59) encourage increased positive work performance;
- ii. that societal, and socio-organisational norms play a decisive role in work performance;
- iii. that group and individual dynamics cannot be ignored in the organisational context;
- iv. that non-financial incentives and approbation influence work performance;
- v. that leadership plays a significant role in the establishment and enforcing of group norms and behaviour; and
- vi. that organisations exist to accomplish other goals in addition to production related and economic goals.

It seems evident from the above that the neoclassical approach to organisation theory served as an important precursor to, and served as a significant catalyst to the development of the organisational culture perspective. This becomes evident when the definition and different levels of Organisational Culture as espoused in this thesis (2.9 and 2.10 *infra*) are compared with the tenets of the neoclassical approach. The aspects of patterns of behaviour (level 1 of Organisational Culture) and beliefs and values (level 2 of Organisational Culture) are direct adoptions from the human relations

perspective and human potential movements of the neoclassical approach. It should also be noted that the level comprising basic underlying assumptions of Organisational Culture results from the beliefs and values that through sustained repetition and use "are likely to be taken for granted and to have dropped out of awareness" (Schein 1985:9; 1990:111, 112, *cf.* 2.10. *infra*).

While many behavioural scientists from the neoclassical era unwittingly contributed to the development of the organisational culture perspective of organisation theory, Elliot Jacques, who specifically used the word "culture" in his published works in 1952 in a similar fashion to the use of the word in extant Organisational Culture writings, could well be said to be the founder of the organisational culture perspective (Ott 1989:150). Jacques, in his description of the culture of a factory, identified what are now accepted as elements of Organisational Culture, viz., knowledge, attitudes, customs, habits, values, conventions and taboos (*cf.* Schein 1985:9; 1990:111, 112; also 2.10 *infra*).

2.2.1.4 Modern structural organisation theory (+/-1960-1982)

Roux *et al* (1996:28) refer to the *modern* structural approach in organisational theory as the contemporary approach. The *modern* structural approach is characterised by the fact that it does not abandon the classical or the neoclassical approaches of organisational theory, having been greatly influenced by both (Ott 1989:157), but rather expands on them, focussing on a greater awareness and understanding of the demands of the environment in which an organisation functions. The result is that this approach explains contemporary institutions within a setting of an encompassing system (Roux 1996:28; *cf.* Ott 1989:157).

The primary tenets of the *modern* structural school can be listed as follows:

- i. Organisations are rational institutions with rational objectives that may best be

- achieved through systems of defined and formal authority.
- ii. Rationality in organisations may best be maintained through organisational control and coordination.
 - iii. There is one best or most appropriate structure for any organisation (reminiscent of the classical approach), and the latter is determined by the goals of the organisation, the ambient environment, the nature of its products or services, and the technology it utilises.
 - iv. The quality and quantity of production may be increased by specialisation and the division of labour.
 - v. Structural flaws are the cause of most organisational problems, hence transforming structures can solve organisational problems¹.

The *modern* structural school and the organisational culture perspective have very little in common, except for the emphasis of both approaches on the environmental challenges that demand appropriate responses of differentiation and integration. Schein, for example, characterises as the responses learned by members in struggling to solve problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein 1985:42-56; cf. Ott 1989:158, 159).

2.2.1.5 Systems and contingency theories of organisation (+/-1970-1990)

The systems and contingency perspectives have dominated organisation theory since the late 1960's (Evan 1993:5). This school is characterised by a rejection of the closed systems approach as represented by the classical and neoclassical approaches to organisation theory, tending rather towards an over emphasis of the influence of the environments on organisations and their functions (Katz & Kahn as cited in Shafritz & Hyde 1992:148-159; Ott 1989:159; Roux 1996:29). The major proponents of the systems and contingency perspective are Katz and Kahn, and Thompson (Ott 1989:159; Shafritz & Hyde 1992:148-159). This approach also alerts to the critical

importance of the influence of the environment on organisations. Accordingly, organisations must be regarded as dynamic, open systems that have to function within, and respond to, a continually changing environment (Evan 1993:6-8; Robbins 1987:10; Hodge *et al.* 1996:16, 17; Adams & Ingersoll 1990:285, 286). Organisations that do not interact with their ambient environment may be regarded as closed systems. Organisations can therefore be said to be contingent upon their ambient environments. Thus, "... there is no one best or most appropriate way for all organisations to structure or organise. The best-fitting structure depends on the context that the organisation faces" (Hodge *et al.* 1996: 17; *cf.* Evan 1993:6-7).

The organisational culture perspective places a high emphasis on organisations as open systems. It perceives the two primary sources of organisational culture as the macro- and microenvironments in which organisations have to function and the nature of the functions of the organisations (Schein 1985: 42-56; Ott 1989:160). The major emphasis that the organisational culture perspective places on the environment serves to link the latter to the systems and contingency approach.

While the systems approach, particularly the open systems analogy, was the dominant mode of thought in organisation theory for approximately two decades, Pondy and Mitroff (as cited in Smircich 1983:353, 354) proposed that the culture metaphor replace the open systems metaphor as an analytical framework. They therefore argue for a model that would "... be concerned with the higher mental functions of human behaviour, such as language and the creation of meaning" (Smircich 1983:354). This argument is based on the belief that the culture metaphor includes, but also goes beyond, the open systems metaphor.

2.2.1.6 The power and politics perspective of organisation theory (+/- 1975-1985)

The theoretical grounding of the power and politics perspective is recent compared with the other schools considered above. This approach perceives organisations as

complex systems of individuals and coalitions, each representing parochial interests, beliefs, values and perspectives, and competing with each other for limited organisational resources (Ott 1989:164, 165; Hodge *et al.* 1996:346). These individuals and coalitions may comprise formal or legitimate sources of power and authority, or informal sources of power and authority in the organisation. The varied goals invariably give rise to conflict within the organisation, and lead to a blurring of organisational goals (Hodge *et al.* 1996:346).

Ott (1989:165) asserts that:

"... only rarely are organisational goals established by those in positions of formal authority. Goals result from ongoing manoeuvring and bargaining between individuals and coalitions. Coalitions that form are not permanent bodies, but tend to be transient; depending on the support that the issues involved can muster. They shift with issues and often cross vertical and horizontal organisational boundaries".

These shifts in organisational coalitions and goals which contribute toward organisational uncertainty (Ott 1989:167) point to the distinct possibility that organisational behaviour and decision-making are not necessarily rational in all instances (Bounds *et al.* 1996:346; *cf.* 3.6 *infra*).

In concurrence with the power and politics perspective of organisation theory the organisational culture perspective approaches behavioural rationality in organisational settings with a large measure of suspicion due to the fact that it - the organisational culture perspective - recognises organisational uncertainty (Ott 1989:167). Organisational culture is less concerned with improving organisational efficiency than it is with questioning the ends organisations serve, *i.e.*, "... examining the context in which corporate society is meaningful" (Smircich 1983:355).

An outstanding feature of the organisational culture perspective, which is also characteristic of the power and politics perspective, is its recognition of sub-cultures or

coalitions (see 3.2 *infra*) and the influence these bring to bear on the extant organisational values and beliefs that impact upon organisational behaviour (Ott 1989:167; 3.2 *infra*, cf. 2.11 *infra*).

Table 2.1 represents a summary of the above section that deals with the antecedents of organisation theory and the contributions that it made towards the development of the organisational culture perspective.

2.2.1.7 Organisational culture approach to organisation theory

As the organisational culture perspective is dealt with in more detail later in this and the next chapter (see 2.9 and chapter three *infra*) a brief introductory explanation will suffice here.

It can be seen from the above (2.2.1.1 to 2.2.1.6 *supra*) that the organisational culture perspective is concerned with the whole organisation, including informal aspects thereof. Ideally the dominant culture that exists in any organisation results from organisational ideologies (see 2.9, 2.11, 5.5 & 5.6 *infra*) that produce the artefacts, norms, values, beliefs, and basic assumptions that the incumbents of the particular organisation ideally will espouse (see 2.10 *infra*). The said norms, values and beliefs energise and direct the actions of the people within the organisation, and provide the rationale for their actions (see 3.6.11 *infra*).

From the above historical review of the important approaches to organisation theory it should be clear that the organisation culture perspective is rooted in, and has been influenced by the various approaches. As Ott (1989:168) asserts, the organisation culture perspective did not appear spontaneously, but "... evolved out of a long history within organisation theory" (cf. Alvesson 1990: 31-33). Accordingly the organisational culture perspective is not simply a repackaging of "... old stuff as if it were new" (Athos, as cited in Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg & Martin 1985:10; cf. Keraudren P

1996: 71-73, 80-86), but a legitimate growth in the responsible understanding of how organisations function.

Table 2.1: Summary table - Organisational Theory antecedents to the Organisational Culture perspective

Organisation Theory Approach	Contribution towards the development of the Organisational Culture perspective
Classical Organisation Theory	Contribution by contrast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational Culture repudiates "one best - method". - Organisational Culture emphasises organisational context. - Organisational Culture questions the Scientific Method as understood by classical organisation theorists.
Classical Philosophers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehension of the role of norms and values in organisational setting. - Emphasis on role of organisational leaders in establishing organisational values.
Neoclassical Organisation Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on human relations. - Importance of behaviour patterns (level 1 of O/C)*. - Importance of beliefs and values (level 2 of O/C)*. - Contribution to development of underlying assumptions (level 3 of O/C)*. - Elements of Organisational Culture.
<i>Modern</i> Structural Organisational Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on role of the environment on the organisation, hence on Organisational Culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External adaptation. - Internal integration.
Systems and Contingency Theories of Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on organisations as open systems. - Contingent relationship between organisations and ambient environments.
Power and Politics perspective of Organisation Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of the roles of sub-culture. - Questioning of behavioural rationality in organisational setting, <i>i.e.</i>, - Recognises organisational uncertainty.

*O/C is here used as short hand for "Organisational Culture"

2.2.2 Attitudes towards organisational culture approach as a legitimate organisation perspective

During the late 1970's the concept of culture as a new metaphor for understanding social systems, particularly organisations, challenged theorists to introduce more interpretive models of inquiry from anthropology and sociology, as opposed to the limited and rigid research paradigms modelled on the physical sciences (Pettigrew 1979:570-581; Jelinek, Smircich and Hirsch 1983:331-338; Allaire & Firsirotu 1984: 193; Hofstede 1991:247-259; Sackman 1991:7-9; Van Fleet 1991: 380; Evan 1993: 295, 296). Keraudren (1996:80) makes the important point that while studies on organisational culture borrow from Anthropological works on culture, it is not the rigid methodologies of Anthropology that are borrowed, but rather the "metaphors, definitions and notions". However, the construct quickly became absorbed into mainstream theorising as simply a new "variable" that can be accommodated in existing themes of organisation theory (White & Jacques 1995: 45, 46). This led to its critical potential becoming diluted or entirely lost. For example, perusal of South African Public Administration sources that appeared over the last three decades (1970's through 1990's) reveals, on the one hand, an absence of the construct for the most part, and, on the other, a lack of proper understanding or clear explication where it is mentioned or utilised (South Africa 1993:11, *cf.* 7; 1995:49, 101; 1997:54; Venter 1996:42, 43; Wooldridge & Cranko 1995:343) .

Smircich (1983:339-358), reporting in a special edition of *Administrative Science Quarterly* devoted exclusively to Organisational Culture, states that where attention was given to culture in organisation theory, it was treated either as just one "variable" in organisation studies, or as a "root metaphor" (Smircich 1983:339-358). Culture as a variable indicates that the construct was deemed just one more attribute of organisations to be studied using the dominant methods of so-called scientific inquiry (Smircich 1983:343-347). In terms of the root metaphor approach, culture was something an organisation was, an entity not well represented by reductionistic, measurement centred, hypothesis-testing methods (Smircich 1983:347-353).

Goodsell (1990:495), along with Schein (1996:229-240), laments the fact that so little attention has been given to a phenomenon that is so real, although ill defined. They ascribe the lack of attention to the organisational culture perspective to defective research methods. Schein, for example, suggests that methods of inquiry into organisational phenomena fail to anchor concepts in observed reality (Schein 1996:-231, 232). He states that "(W)e have gone too quickly to formal elegant abstractions that seemingly could be operationally defined and measured, *i.e.* centralisation-decentralisation, differentiation-integration, power, etc., and failed to link these to observed reality" (Schein 1996:232; *cf.* Alvesson 1990: 31-33; Goodsell 1990:495). The latter neglect had as consequence that subjective abstractions are treated as objective reality, with resultant "fuzzy theory", and conclusions that are useless to practitioners (Schein 1996:232; *cf.* Schein 1985: 48).

Concurring with the above, White and Jacques (1995:46) correctly observe that to conceive of organisations as cultures raises issues of epistemology, social values and issues of methodology (*cf.* 1.5 *supra*). The challenge that this poses to theorists in particular could be the reason for the misplaced caution exercised in the treatment of, and often complete avoidance of, Organisational Culture as a useful and important construct and phenomenon in organisation theory and practice.

This thesis argues for the importance of Organisational Culture in public administration theory and practice, while focussing specifically on the lack of true comprehension of organisational matters that ensues if due consideration is not given to the construct during the transformation of the South African public service.

2.3 Ethnography as approach to understanding organisational culture

Goodsell (1990:495) identifies organisational culture as one of the five² emerging issues in public administration theory and practice "... in which the field could profitably

invest substantial work in the decades to come". He suggests that the importance of the organisational culture construct will emerge clearly when administrative ethnography, *i.e.*, the careful description of what is observed and perceived in administrative and organisational life (Bullock & Stallybrass 1979:215; Hanks 1990:425), is honestly used as a research tool. An ethnographic approach will provide insights into the heretofore neglected descriptive diversity of administrative life (Goodsell 1990:497). It will also serve to direct public administration (theory and practice) attention from its preoccupation with formal structures (institutionalisation, *cf.* Bekke Online) to neglected realities because they may be uncomfortable to deal with. A constant attempt to desegregate the artificially compounded ideas that are popular in Public Administration (such as generic administrative functions and universally applicable administrative principles) is needed. This plea to face social and organisational verities must be backed up by faithful descriptions of the differentiations (such as formal structures and informal realities) that are discovered. The latter, then, amounts to a plea for a move away from what is and has been comfortable to deal with, and to renew public administration theory and practice by dealing with the challenging issues that come lately to the awareness.

Goodsell (1990:497) further asserts that an ethnographic attention to organisational culture could lay the basis for a deeper sense of identification and self-awareness on the part of public officials. When public sector organisational culture is revealed, described, and understood, public managers can understand themselves and their roles in relation to administrative verities better (Sackman 1991:33). "This cultural awareness can lead to deeper bonds, more pride, and greater morale. Individuals are no longer mere bureaucrats, but members of a unique cultural entity whose content is clearly seen" (Goodsell 1990:497).

In light of the latter, it is imperative to consider further the importance of organisational culture.

2.4 Importance of organisational culture

Commenting within the context of the corporate sector, Harris (1985:35, 36; *cf. Kelly 1989:23*) provides compelling reasons why the awareness of the organisational culture perspective (both as phenomenon and as theoretical construct) should be increased. Within the South African context these reasons can be summarised as follows:

- i. Cultural awareness, for the most part, provides a sense of identity to individuals and to the organisation, hence it encourages stability (*cf. Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:677, 678*).
- ii. It provides increased insight to people and their behaviour.
- iii. It aids in the understanding of the culture of an organisation before attempting to influence or change it.
- iv. It is of vital importance in the recognition, understanding and analysing of sub-cultures present in the organisation.
- v. Cultural insights are vital in the study of comparative management.
- vi. International liaison and business operations make it imperative to understand the cultures involved.
- vii. Cultural awareness is important in all relocation activities, including transfers of personnel. This is also true for mergers of government departments such as that suggested by the Presidential Review Commission, namely that the international trade function of the Department of Trade and Industry be phased into the Department of Foreign Affairs (South Africa 1998: chapter 7, Online).
- viii. Cultural components should be built into all management training programmes in order to sensitise and equip them in their management function.
- ix. Cultural understanding is indispensable in dealing with minority and ethnic issues.
- x. Cultural awareness enhances participation.

In addition to the above, the following reasons why the organisational culture perspective deserves much more attention in public administration theory and practise may be advanced:

- i. The opening up of new conceptual potentialities and a more comprehensive view of organisational life for managers, theorists and researchers.
- ii. The potential contribution of an understanding and utilisation of the organisational culture perspective to improved effectiveness and efficiency in and of the public sector.
- iii. The contribution that an acknowledgement of the phenomenon can make to the current transformation efforts of the South African public service.
- iv. The provision of an understanding of why transformation and change in organisations are arduous and slow.
- v. The potential contribution to leadership effectiveness.
- vi. The differentiation between organisations, aiding in defining organisational boundaries.
- vii. The important relevance it holds for personnel issues such as selection and training.
- viii. It provides appropriate organisational standards, including standards of employment and other personnel aspects (*cf.* Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:678).
- ix. It generates commitment, responsibility and a sense of community rather than individual self-interest (*cf.* Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:677, 678).
- x. It reduces uncertainty, making clear to employees how they are to perform their job function.
- xi. It provides control mechanisms that determine and guide behaviour in an organisational setting.

From the above it can be deduced that understanding the role, function and importance of organisational culture may contribute significantly towards an understanding of the dynamics of any change and transformation process, as it becomes clear that transformation efforts are aimed at changing elements identified as issues salient to organisational culture. In this sense, transformation efforts can hypothetically be described as efforts to change the culture of organisations (see chapters four, five and six *infra*). In light of the latter, it is helpful to also consider what organisational culture does.

2.5 Functions of organisational culture

While this section deals with the functions of organisational culture, it should be pointed out that 2.4 *supra* also deals with some functions, albeit in a less direct manner.

Ott (1989:68-69) identifies at least five major functions of organisational culture. These functions provide significant insights into what organisational culture does, and why organisational culture continues to exist. Some of the more prominent functions are:

- i. It aids the members of the organisation in identifying how to act or think within the particular organisation, as it provides the members with shared patterns of cognitive interpretations or perceptions (Latouche 1983:265, Robbins 1990:438), and helps them to make sense of their work world.
- ii. It provides for the organisational members a sense of what is valuable, and how they are expected to feel, as it provides shared patterns of affect, and also an emotional sense of involvement and commitment to organisational values and moral codes.

In this sense organisational culture serves as the collective memory of the organisation, where members of the organisation may gain insights on, and information about the goals, and value-systems of the organisation, as well as where they fit into the organisational setting (*cf.* Latouche 1983:265). This results in cementing the commitment of the participants to the organisation, and of creating organisational citizenship, which can be described as that sense of understanding, internalising, and identifying with the goals of the organisation.

- iii. It helps in the determination and definition of borders, as it allows criteria through which members and non-members may be identified (*cf.* Pietersen 1991:26, 27).
- iv. It serves as a control system, proscribing unacceptable behaviour patterns, while encouraging behaviour patterns that promote organisational goals.
- v. While it has not yet been satisfactorily proven empirically, it seems likely that there exists a strong relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance (*cf.* Jackson 1993:31; Latouche 1983:266). Organisational culture

offers guidelines or interpretations of guidelines with reference to what the actual goals and performance of the organisation are and should be (Latouche 1983:266).

The above logically gives rise to the necessity to establish a premise from which an understanding of organisational culture as it manifests within the public service may be developed. A review of the proliferation of efforts at definition and conceptualisation as evident in Organisational Culture literature will assist in this intent. //

2.6 Establishing a foundation - an analytical review of research on the organisational culture perspective

The continued dispute about whether Organisational Culture is indeed a core construct in organisational dynamics or not may result from the fact that its exact meaning remains inordinately vague and enigmatic. Jackson (1993:31) observes that organisational culture "... remains for management the most mysterious of all forces operating within an organisation, even though it is potentially the most powerful in influencing business performance." Schein (1985:48) concurs. The vagueness that attends the understanding of organisational culture can be said to be a function of what facet or aspect of the construct is being concentrated upon (see 3.6 *infra*). The latter is indicative of the fact that the way in which organisational culture is defined will impact considerably on the way it is examined and studied (Brown 1995:8; *cf.* 2.2.2).

The obscurity in understanding with reference to the organisational culture construct might be due to the fact that the concept "culture" was originally advanced by anthropologists in an endeavour to describe societies as anthropological units (Jelinek, Smircich & Hirsch 1983:331, 332; Allaire & Firsirotu 1984:195, Klein 1996:323). It was later found to be useful in describing organisations (Muchinsky 1993: 270), as organisations may be viewed as "societies writ small" (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984:193), or as micro-societies with their own socialisation processes, norms and history (Latouche 1983: 263), and may therefore be expected to manifest distinct cultural traits. The public sector, by virtue of its *raison d'être*; namely delivery of essential services, may be

expected to have very close relationships with society. In the latter regard the ideal for the transformed public service in South Africa is for it to be broadly representative of the South African society (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:217, 218; cf 4.3 & 6.4 *infra*). In light of this it should be expected to possess and reflect the culture or cultures of the various publics it serves (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b); South Africa 1996: 195(1)(i)). Using this anthropomorphic metaphor in the discourse of organisations, it is often stated that they have personalities, and needs, and that they experience growth - and other problems (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984:193, Stapley 1996:141-163, Latouche 1983:263; cf. Cunningham 1997: 471-490). The fact that organisations may be expected to exhibit distinct cultural traits implies that it may be concluded that culture is something that an organisation is and not something that an organisation has.

While organisational culture in Management terms has derived from culture in Anthropological terms, the term "culture" is not wholly synonymous between the two constructs. This becomes evident at a superficial consideration of the criteria for membership in the two cultures (Klein 1996:326):

- i. The culture described by Anthropology has as basic membership criterion that a person is born and raised in a particular society, whereas individuals join organisational culture much later in life through employment.
- ii. While membership in societal culture is conditioned by birth, membership in and of organisational culture forms part of a conditional exchange relationship between employee and employer.
- iii. It is evident that membership in an ethnic culture has no specific goal orientation as driving force, while membership in organisational culture has the resolution of specific goals in view.
- iv. Membership in ethnic cultures is permanent while membership of organisational culture is likely to be temporary, a function of job exit or cultural transformation.

Although awareness of organisational culture derives from the cultural awareness characteristic of anthropological studies, it is nevertheless important that organisational

culture should not be confused with the cultural environment in which organisations function. Organisations and the culture of organisations are therefore not synonymous with the societal cultural environment. However, they are deeply saturated with the values of the ambient society. The latter close relationship with the ambient society is what provides to organisations, particularly public sector organisations, the "... legitimisation of (their) goals and activities" (Latouche 1983:263-2650; cf. Jreisat 1992:141; Hofstede 1991:13-18, 181-183). This was evident in the support that government policies that are now frowned upon received from public officials of the erstwhile apartheid public service (see 5.4 & 5.6 *infra*).

Another noteworthy aspect that warrants emphasis is the fact that the primary concern with a critical analysis of the organisational culture perspective is the effective functioning of the organisation rather than the study and analysis of organisational culture *per se* (Jreisat 1992:142), making the analysis of organisational culture not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Hence, from the point of view of public administration theory and practice the definitive purpose of organisational culture analysis is primarily political and managerial, not anthropological.

2.7 Major themes of Organisational Culture

When the profusion of definitions about Organisational Culture is considered analytically, it becomes evident that at least two major themes pervade the major definitions. These themes are *norms* and *assumptions*.

2.7.1 Norms

Organisational culture influences the behaviour of individuals in the organisation through the norms or standards that are institutionalised and enforced by the social system in vogue in the organisation. The importance of taking cognisance of sub-cultures in organisations (see 2.11, 3.2 & 6.7 *infra*) points to the fact that the behaviour

and attitudes of individuals in organisations can and does also impact upon the organisational culture of that organisation (Schein 1996: E-mail). The individual involved in the organisation experiences these norms and standards as group norms that serve as guidelines for what is expected of members within the organisation. Although norms operate as articulated or unarticulated rules, they express the shared beliefs of most group members about what behaviour is appropriate and what not in order for one to be a member in good standing (Owens & Steinhoff 1989:10).

2.7.2 Assumptions

Assumptions may be described as the basic premises on which norms, standards, and all other aspects of culture are built. Assumptions represent the life-view of the incumbents of an organisation. It "... deals with what the people in the organisation accept as true in the world and what is false, what is sensible and what is absurd, what is possible and what is impossible" (Owens & Steinhoff 1989:11; cf. 2.7.3 - 2.7.3.6 *infra*). It is significant to note that the power of culture derives from the fact that it eventually functions as a set of unconscious, unexamined assumptions that are taken for granted (Schein 1985:21).

2.8 Contents of organisational culture

In order to understand organisational culture better it is essential that attention be given to its contents. A consideration of the contents of organisational culture also serves to emphasise the fact that the culture of the organisations consists of elements from all levels of the Organisational Culture as defined at 2.9 and 2.10 *infra*. No level of an organisations' culture can continue to exist without the other levels, hence a consideration of organisational culture must include a consideration of the elements on all levels of the culture. The latter facts also confirm the reciprocal relationships between the different levels of the culture of an organisation (see figure 2.1 *infra*).

The latter holds important implications for transformation of organisational culture. For example, if organisational culture comprises three levels, then it stands to reason that any organisational transformation should take into account the elements of organisational culture as manifested on all these levels. (See, however, 4.10 & 4.11 *infra*).

The abundance of definitions of Organisational Culture evinces the fact that theorists have identified a large number of elements of organisational culture (Ott 1989:20-38; Jreisat 1992:142; Brown 1995: 8-26). These include:

- i. physical manifestations and material artefacts of cultural activity such as logos, badges, stationary, uniforms, office furniture, and use of office space;
- ii. structures giving patterns to organisational activities such as decision-making, coordination, and communication mechanisms;
- iii. behavioural norms that define member beliefs regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and promote mutual predictability;
- iv. values and beliefs that determine priorities assigned to certain outcomes, innovativeness, risk taking versus risk avoidance; and
- v. unconscious, not directly knowable, basic assumptions.

While the above categorisation may seem to imply distinct classes, it should be noted that overlapping occurs between them. For example, some commentators (Schwarz & Davis 1981: 30-48; Homans, as cited in Dyer 1982:7) consider basic assumptions as particular configurations of values and beliefs (*cf.* Dyer 1982:6-12; Schein 1985:9; Ott 1989:44); a consideration that this thesis endorses (see 6.6, 6.7 & 6.8 *infra*).

A brief review of some of the more important contents or elements of organisational culture, for the purposes of this thesis, follows. Note, too, that the analysis of the elements of organisational culture also comprises an elaboration of the major themes of the construct (see 2.7 *supra*). As these elements are assumed to exist on the various levels of organisational culture as defined by Schein (see 2.10 *infra*), his model (see

figure. 2.1) will be utilised in the explanation of the elements of organisational culture. This implies that the elements of organisational culture will be explained from the most superficial manifestations, viz., artefacts, to the more covert elements, embedded in the deepest level, viz., basic assumptions.

2.8.1 Artefacts

Generally most organisational culture theorists and commentators agree that artefacts are the most evident, concrete and tangible manifestations of the culture of an organisation, and hence it is the most easily observed indication of organisational life (Schein 1990:111; Brown 1995:9; Gagliardi 1989:8). Not all artefacts are tangible things however. Patterned behaviour (*i.e.* "... the way we do things around here", as per Muchinsky 1993: 270) can also be an artefact, and thus a symbolic representation of the culture of an organisation (Ott 1989:24). This argument also holds true for some other organisational manifestations such as language, jargon, stories, myths, and jokes, which, though not visible or tangible manifestations, are also identified as organisational artefacts. It can be stated, therefore that behavioural artefacts are represented in rituals and ceremonies, while physical artefacts can, for example, be found in art, technology, and architecture (Dandridge, Mitroff & Joyce 1980: 77-82; Trice & Beyer 1986:372-380; Sackman 1991:18-20). Verbal artefacts are primarily in the form of language, stories, and myths (Dyer 1982:3; Sackman 1991:20).

Some commentators emphasise artefacts to the point that they equate organisational culture with artefacts, *i.e.*, artefacts are the culture (example Muchinsky 1993:270; Hodder, as quoted in Ott 1989:25; Williams, Dobson & Walters 1989:10-14). In an effort to interpret organisational culture, commentators who hold to this view are wont to concentrate on tangible manifestations, on behaviour patterns, and information about specific programmes; *i.e.* the most superficial manifestations of organisational culture, to the neglect of the deeper lying values, beliefs, and assumptions that inspire and animate artefacts; providing their content. It is a misconception of the organisational

culture construct to base an interpretation, definition, explanation or investigation of organisational culture solely on the latter understanding. A contrary approach is advocated at 3.3 *infra* where organisational climate is explained and contrasted with organisational culture. This thesis endorses the approach that any examination of the organisational culture needs to take into account all the levels that comprise it.

Attention will now be turned to a review of the subcategories of artefacts. The subcategories that will be considered are material objects, corporate architecture and identity, language, stories, rites and rituals, and patterns and norms of behaviour.

2.8.1.1 Material objects

Material objects as artefacts would include annual reports, printed mission statements, and the products of an organisation (Ott 1989:24). It is evident in the format and presentation of the annual reports of the South African Public Service Commission, for example, that there has taken place a change in organisational culture. The annual reports since 1993 have a distinct African "flavour" in the sense that the art used on the cover is characteristically African. It is also evident that the compilers of the annual reports since 1993 have made concerted efforts to present them as more readable and more accessible to the general public than the reports prior to 1993.

Mission and vision statements define the long-term goals and vision of an organisation in terms of its espoused value system and management practices, principle aims and objectives, and key stakeholders. Mission statements provide a source of information about the culture of the organisation. In this regard the "Vision and Mission for the new public service" (South Africa 1995: 14, 15) communicate a culture and ethos of service to all, characterised by, among other things, a development orientation, efficiency, effectiveness, non-discrimination and representativity (*cf.* South Africa 1996: sec 195).

This, however, may only be with reference to the *values espoused*, and may not be the *values in use* in the organisation (see 6.8 & 6.10 *infra*). This point places additional emphasis on the fact that a single artefact or even all artefacts in an organisation should not be interpreted and utilised as the only manifestation or manifestations of the culture of that organisation.

2.8.1.2 Corporate architecture and corporate identity

It is evident that modern organisations are placing a high premium on their physical appearance. This preoccupation with corporate image and architecture, to an extent, finds expression in the South African government and public sector domain in the recent well-publicised removal of paintings, statues, and other artefacts representative of the previous government era, from government offices in the Free State province.

During 1995 it was also proposed by the then Deputy Minister of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology that a national commission should be established that would deal with apartheid symbols located on government property. She argued that a common history should be promoted "... rather than a sectarian one or one which illustrates the dominance of one (ethnic group) by another" (Waugh 1995:13).

As the new government and public service will and do invariably occupy buildings and offices of the previous public service, it is evident that not much will change in structural architecture. It is assumed that new meanings will be given to old buildings and symbols (Waugh 1995:13, *cf.* 3.6.2 *infra*), for example the re-naming of the presidential official residence in Pretoria from "Libertas" to "Mahlamba Ndlopfu"; evidently a Tsonga phrase interpreted as "dawn of a new day" (Van Zyl 1997:interview), provide an indication of a change in culture; a new beginning.

For the latter reasons no further attention will be given to architecture as an artefact of

organisational culture, except where context specifically demands it.

2.8.1.3 Language

Language and the meanings ascribed and attached to it serve purposes beyond basic transmission of ideas and concepts. Ott (1989:20) points out that language defines and shapes reality, and controls cognitive patterns, affecting the way people perceive and think about things (*cf.* Fox & Miller 1995:42-73). This implies that what is perceived as reality in the organisational setting "... is not just a function of certain objective facts and events, but also of our subjective perceptions and interpretations of those circumstances" (Thomas 1996:7). The centrality of language to organisational culture lies precisely in the fact that it holds powerful sway over thought and perceptions of reality (Ott 1989:28; Brown 1995:12, 13). The perceptions that prevail in and outside of the public sector with regards to Afrikaans as language in use serves as example. Based on the above reasoning the necessity of taking account of language in the consideration of the organisational culture construct becomes acutely apparent. Consider, for example Minister Skweyiya's complaints against receiving correspondence in Afrikaans from a senior public official who also served in the previous public service. Skweyiya required the correspondence to be in either Xhosa, Zulu, or English, interpreting the Afrikaans correspondence as an effort from the public official to resist transformation and the new government (Finansies & Tegniek 1995: 10).

In addition to its ability to shape thoughts and its controlling function, language may serve the following purposes in the organisational setting (Terpstra 1978:2, 3; Brown 1995:12-16; Thomas 1996:6-8; see 4.7 *infra*):

- i. Language equips organisational members to communicate effectively and achieve common organisational goals. It is important for newcomers to the organisation to learn the unique language of the particular organisation. The latter will be influenced and determined by the salient goals of the organisation, as the lan-

guage of most organisations have unique words and phrases, as determined by their goals. This makes it important for newcomers to the organisation to become acquainted with the jargon in use, as the language in use in any organisation or social group is socially constructed, and conveyed to the mind through communication; whether in verbal, written or sign format. The importance of a common language becomes apparent when the problems that may ensue when members of an organisation interpret goals and instructions in incompatible ways are considered.

- ii. Language serves to aid in the identification of the members of a social -, professional -, or other group. It is also used as a means of excluding non-group members, or unwanted members from the organisation or social grouping. The perception held about the use of Afrikaans in the public sector; *i.e.*, that it is used to exclude non-Afrikaans speaking public officials (Levitz 1996: interview) serves as an example. Quite a number of Whites who visit municipal offices in Pretoria are complaining about the use of English by Black public officials; a usage that they interpret as a means designed to exclude them (Levitz 1996: interview). Levitz conjectures that this complaint is probably representative of the general trend in public service delivery.
- iii. Language is a product of an organisations' culture, but also serves to maintain and transmit the culture (see 4.9.1 *infra*). The examples cited under "ii" *supra* also serve in this regard. Giliomee (1997: 15) opines that the quest for a new culture in South Africa, which obviously includes the public service (based on the argument that the transformation of the public service should serve as a *micro-cosmos* of transformation of South African society (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995: 217, 218)) must also manifest on the language and culture front (*taal- en kultuurgebied*).

2.8.1.4 Stories

Stories as artefacts may be understood as being anecdotes or narratives about series of incidents or occurrences in the history of an organisation. These narratives are presumed to be true, and aim to convey morals and organisational beliefs, values and

basic assumptions. Stories ordinarily involve a hero or heroes, *i.e.*, leading actors, who personify the values and embody the strengths of an organisational culture, and hence serve as performance role models (Van Fleet 1991:388, 389). Because stories tend to have greater impact than other forms of communication, the messages they aim to transmit are remembered much longer (Van Fleet 1991:388, 389; Fox and Muller 1995:6-13; Thomas 1996:7; *cf.* Terpstra 1978:2, 3). For this reason they are used effectively when new employees are inducted into the organisation, when attempts are made to form a counter culture, or when the organisational culture is being changed. The "cultus figure status" (Geldenhuys 1997:15) that developed around former President Nelson Mandela, in the public service, in the general South African society, as well as internationally, serves as an example of the power of hero stories and its impact on culture, particularly organisational culture.

2.8.1.5 Ceremonies

Ceremonies can be understood as rituals celebrating the organisational culture's values and basic assumptions. They serve to inculcate and strengthen organisational culture by celebrating heroes and the defeat of threats to the organisational culture (Trice & Beyer 1986:372-380; Sackman 1991:18-20; Van Fleet 1991:388). Celebrating heroes, and retelling the story of their achievements, serve as motivation for others to do the kind of work that the organisation wants to encourage.

2.8.1.6 Rites and rituals

Rites and rituals as artefacts are habits or daily routines of organisational life that provide organisational members with security and identity, while it also functions as control mechanisms. Rites and rituals provide an understanding of how an organisation functions, what is acceptable and what unacceptable behaviour, and how to manage change. Deal and Kennedy (as cited in Van Fleet 1991:389; *cf.* Schein 1985:25) state that strong cultures communicate their values and expectations more

effectively through the symbolism of rites and rituals than through written guidelines. The presentation of certificates and trophies to employees who achieve set organisational standards serve as an example. Such presentations take on special meaning to employees, and serve to inculcate a particular organisational culture.

2.8.1.7 Patterns and norms of behaviour

Norms may be defined as prescriptions for behaviour that dictate what forms of behaviour are proper and what inappropriate in the organisational setting. Bullock and Stallybrass (1979:429) define norm, in a normative sense, as the "... ideal or standard to which people think behaviour ought to conform, or which some legislating authority lays down". They also indicate that the concept "norm" also refers to what is normal or usual behaviour in some community or social group. In the latter case, the applicable adjective is "normal". Norms as a level of organisational culture refers to a coinciding of both meanings, *i.e.*, as a conjunction of the normative prescriptions in an organisation, and of normal behaviour patterns within the latter.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the importance of artefacts lie not in themselves, but in the link they provide to the deeper levels of organisational culture. Brown (1995:9) points out that the choices an organisation makes pertaining to such things as the use of office space, language, and behaviour patterns, amongst other things, will evince the "cultural essence" of the organisation. Open plan office space, for example, may reflect a cultural propensity of cooperation and teamwork, while accommodating personnel in individual offices may be an indication of an ethic of individual autonomy and independence. Open plan office space as opposed to individual offices may also be an indication of subordinate status against seniority, and thus the number of individual offices in relation to open plan arrangement may provide an indication of hierarchical composition, and hence job categorisation in the organisation (Brown 1995:9, 10).

2.8.2 Beliefs and values

Beliefs and values are integral parts of organisational culture. In practice it is difficult to distinguish between beliefs and values, but it may be said that beliefs comprise consciously held convictions of what is true or not true, while values are understood as the sentient affective desires or wants that people hold dear - that which is important to people. While beliefs may come about as a result of experimentation, research, or through faith, the transmission of organisational values are ideally imparted to organisational members via the managers or executives of an organisation (*cf.* 2.2.1.2 *supra*; 4.3.5.2 ii, 6.3 & 6.7 *infra*; Dyer 1985:21, 216, 223, 224; Schein 1985:223-243). Indeed, the construction and maintenance of a system of shared values is one of the most critical tasks of management (Schein 1985: 223, 224; Ott 1989:40; Brown 1995:21). In South Africa the determination, identification and transmission of values and beliefs for the new public service vests in the Department of Public Service and Administration (see 4.5.1.3, 6.3, 6.7 *infra*). Some of the values that are constantly emphasised in the new public service are equality, representivity, transparency, efficiency, democracy, and participation (RSA 1993:212(2)(b); Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995: 217, 218; 6.8 *infra*).

Ott (1989:41) emphasises the fact that shared beliefs and values are central to organisational culture, as they provide the "... justification for why people and organisations behave as they do"; what this thesis refers to as logics of action (see 3.6.1.1 *infra*). Values and beliefs also aid in the understanding of artefacts, as they determine, shape and propel them. A transformation of value system, therefore, amounts to a transformation of the organisational culture. For example, the pursuit of the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (South Africa 1995a) has as primary aim the transformation of the public sector value system from one of apartheid service delivery to one that emphasises inclusiveness, reconstruction and development that will benefit all of South African society, particularly the previously disadvantaged sectors (*cf.* Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995: 217-223; South Africa 1996: sec. 195; Ramaphosa 1996:19; Thornhill 1995:50-59). This transformation of the value system implies a

change in organisational culture of the public service (South Africa 1997: sec 3.1); a different way of doing (see 5.6.1 *infra*).

2.8.3 Basic underlying assumptions

Basic assumptions comprise the third and highest level of organisational culture. According to Schein (1990: 111, 112; *cf.* Ivancevich and Matteson 1993: 677) they refer to the implicit, preconscious, deeply rooted suppositions that people share, which serve as guides to their perceptions, feelings and emotions about material objects, events, themselves, and other people. These assumptions are reflected in the perspectives and values of the group, and are expressed in the verbal, behavioural, and physical artefacts exhibited by the group (Dyer 1982:9).

Basic assumptions, while related to beliefs, may be distinguished from the latter in the following ways:

- i. While basic assumptions have most likely dropped out of awareness, are held unconsciously, and are very difficult to detect, beliefs are conscious and can be fairly easy detected.
- ii. Basic assumptions, because they cannot easily be detected, are not easily confrontable, and hence cannot easily be changed. Beliefs, on the other hand, can be confronted and modified because they are easily detectable (Schein 1996: 8 August, E-mail).
- iii. Basic assumptions include beliefs, perceptions, values and feelings, while beliefs are comprised of relatively non-complex cognitions (see 2.8.2 *supra*).

Schein (1985:85-111) provides a typology of basic assumptions that also serve as an important medium whereby the implications of basic assumptions to organisational culture can be grasped. Brief consideration will be given to the five dimensions of his typology, with illustrative comments *vis-à-vis* the South African public service

implications.

2.8.3.1 Assumptions about the relationship of the organisation to its perceived environment

Organisational culture can be said to serve at least two critical functions; viz. to integrate members so that they know how to relate to one another, and to aid the organisation in adapting to its ambient environment (Daft 1998:369; *cf.* Schein 1990:111; *cf.* 2.5 *supra*). Considering the second function of environmental adaptation, organisations have different perceptions with regards to the degree of control that they can muster over their own destiny. Some are convinced that they can dominate nature; *i.e.* their "perceived total environments" (Schein 1985:86), while others endeavour to harmonise with it by finding an appropriate niche. Still others suppose that they are dominated by their environment, and simply respond thereto, instead of being proactive. As Schein (1985:87) points out, the important aspect here is how accurate the assumptions are. The degree of accuracy of the assumption will determine how successfully an organisation will operate within its ambient environment. If an organisation, for example, operates on the primary assumption that it holds a monopoly over resources while that is not the case, it will obviously run into a number of difficulties; such as competition and other related obstacles.

Public sector organisations, by virtue of their *raison d'être*, need to be responsive to the needs of their particular environments. Their measure of responsiveness is, however, a function of various factors within their environments, such as professional capacity and competence of their departments and personnel, political constraints, competing interest and pressure groups, priority of conflicting needs, and financial and other resources. To a large degree, therefore, the basic assumption of public sector organisations with regard to their relationship toward their environment will need to be one of accepting the role as determined by the needs of the publics they serve as interpreted by, and reflected in, government legislation. Only within these constraints may the public sector be pro active (*cf.* Schein 1985:88, 89).

2.8.3.2 Assumptions about the nature of organisational reality and "truth"

Organisations develop different means of determining what "truth" is, and how to reach decisions. Some establish corporate "truth" and reach decisions by accepting the ostensible wisdom of trusted leaders, while others appeal to sophisticated rules and procedures (Van Fleet 1991:388, 389; Daft 1998:475). Some organisations arrive at decisions through debate and consensus. Still others operate on the basic assumption that what works is truth, and hence what has been demonstrated to work should inform the decision-making process (Schein 1985:88-98; cf Dyer 1982:11, 12).

Whatever means of arriving at the "truth" as espoused in South African public sector organisations, an appeal must of necessity be made to the *Constitution* and the aims and ideals it is in pursuit of. The basic assumption in this regard is that the ultimate "truth" that should drive decision-making *vis-à-vis* service delivery should be an appeal to the basic tenets of the *Constitution* (Act 108 of 1996) and the requirements they lay down, as well as the *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development* (South Africa 1994) which provides the official policy framework of the Government of National Unity (cf. South Africa 1995: 11, 12; cf. 4.2 & 6.4 *infra*).

2.8.3.3 Assumptions about the nature of human nature

A group's or organisation's assumptions about human nature are central to its culture (Dyer 1982:10). Some organisations hold the basic assumption that people are fundamentally lazy (McGregor's Theory X), while others consider people eminently self-motivated (McGregor's Theory Y). Some organisations assume that people are driven by a need for social approbation or self-actualisation, while others see people as being motivated by pecuniary considerations (Schein 1985:98-101).

This basic assumption will obviously inform the manner in which personnel in the public

service are managed, with the resultant influence on the type of service provided to the public (*cf.* Shafritz & Hyde 1992:217-235). With reference to the South African public service context the expressed hope is that the manifestation and application of this assumption will be informed by the diversity of peoples that are serving as public officials (Giliomee 1997:15; Olivier 1995:15; The Public Servant 1995/3:8)

2.8.3.4 Assumptions about the nature of human activity

Related to the above assumption some organisations may assume the veracity of the Protestant work ethic, where work receives a primary emphasis. Other organisations may have to be resigned to an attitude among employees of simply "being", an approach to work which emphasises minimum production, and an emphasis on self-actualisation and self-development through detachment, mediation and control. In such organisations the personal lives of employees are valued highly, but it might serve to the neglect of work life. Others may assume that it is necessary, feasible, and desirable to strike a balance between both work and private lives of employees (Schein 1985:101-103). Lessem (1994:17-38) to an extent argues for the latter approach within the South African context.

The traditional assumption about public service organisations seems to be that public officials emphasise minimum production to the detriment of efficient service delivery. Research relating to South African private sector organisations seems to validate this assumption (Efrat 1996:15). The latter survey indicated that South Africa, during the transformation process, took last place out of 46 countries in relation to efficient service delivery and productivity; a reality that lead to *Afro-pessimism* (Manning as cited in Mittner 1997:13) in the West. These results may reasonably be extrapolated to public sector organisations - as reflected in the findings of the *Provincial Review Report* (1997) - which are generally accepted to be less productive than private sector organisations (Korrespondent 1997:10; Van der Kooy 1997:11).

2.8.3.5 Assumptions about the nature of human relationships

The basic assumptions about how employees should relate to each other and to customers or the publics they serve disclose differences in their organisational cultures. While some organisations foster individualism, others place a high premium on collective action and teamwork. In this regard some organisations are managed autocratically, while others favour paternalistic management styles, and still others prefer democratic management styles (Dyer 1982:10; Schein 1985:109).

It can be concluded from the above that the key assumptions espoused within an organisation lay at the foundation of behaviour in the organisation (Dyer 1982:11, 12). It can also be expected that basic assumptions will often reinforce each other, with the resultant very complex relationships between assumptions (*cf* Schein 1985:109, 110). To illustrate, if the basic assumption in an organisation is that people are considered eminently self-motivated, and a high view is taken of human rights, than it can be expected that the assumption of human relationships will manifest a democratic management style.

While not all assumptions are mutually compatible, it can be expected that a developed organisational culture will manifest a high degree of consistency between assumptions (*cf* Schein 1985:110). An organisational culture in which a conflict between assumptions is rife can concomitantly be described as young; hence in a formative or transforming stage. Conflicts experienced between blacks and whites in the Department of Welfare at Newgate House, Johannesburg (Mlambo 1997:2; *cf*. 6.4.1.8 *infra*) may, in part, be ascribed to conflicting basic assumptions held about each other; aspects that had not yet been addressed due to the recentness of the rationalisation process (*cf*. Adler 1983: 494-496; 6.1 *infra*). It is against such a background where a maternal holding culture (see 2.11; chapter five, and chapter six *infra*) within the transforming South African public service plays a critical role.

2.9 Defining the Organisational Culture construct

With the above as background, the intent with the next section will be to consider some pertinent definitions of organisational culture, and to analytically evaluate them with the view to finally arriving at a operational definition for purposes of the current research.

Ott (1989:69) defines organisational culture as:

"... a social force that controls patterns of organisational behaviour by shaping members' cognitions and perceptions of meanings and realities, providing effective energy for mobilisation, and identifying who belongs and who does not."

The operability of this definition falls short of satisfying, however, as it neglects mention of the impact of the ambient society. It disregards the expressed ideal that particularly public sector organisations should result from the particular needs identified in and by the ambient society. In addition Ott seems to use the concept "social force that controls" as *determining*, rather than *resulting from*, other societal forces. A proper understanding of organisational culture will of necessity articulate the construct as not only determining, but also resulting from, and responding to its ambient society. The importance of this point stems from the fact that it is from the ambient environment that particularly the public sector organisation derives its legitimacy. If the organisational culture is not responsive to its environment in total, then it forfeits its legitimacy. This aspect is explored in more depth in chapter six *infra*.

Taking the above into account, the definition held forward by Jabes and Zussman (1989:96) meets more of the legitimacy criteria that have been argued for. They view organisational culture as:

"... a system of values and beliefs that is influenced by the organisation's structures, its environment and technology to produce norms that are shared by the organisation's members".

Jabes and Zussman contend that organisational culture is "... influenced by the organi-

sation's structures". The understanding of organisational culture can be marred by such a view of the construct, as it is generally assumed that structure should follow function, and not the other way around. Hence it is more logical to assume that organisational culture should be influenced, among other factors, more by the functions that determine the reason for existence of an organisation, and the functions it performs, than by the structure. This, however, is not a denial of the influence of organisational structure on organisational culture, merely an argument for its lesser impact in comparison to function.

Latouche provides an understanding of organisational culture that moves away from general definition of the construct to specifically public sector organisations. He alerts to the fact that public sector organisations need to be understood as "... politically negotiated orders where organisational actors bargain, threaten, (and) form coalitions" (Latouche 1983:263). Within this setting he defines organisational culture as:

"... a configuration of shared and meaningful symbols that characterise the manner in which groups and individuals in that organisation combine to get things done and maximise their own rewards" (Latouche 1983:263).

In a manner related to the latter definition, Muchinsky advances a rather simplified definition of organisational culture, namely, "... the way we do things around here" (Muchinsky 1993:270). This pithy definition indicates that organisational culture refers to a system of shared meaning held by members of any particular organisation that distinguishes their organisation from other organisations (*cf.* Robbins 1993:602, 603). It also emphasises the fact that organisational culture exists in the interaction among individuals in an organisation, and not in the cognitive processes of individual members of an organisation (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984:211; Moran & Volkwein 1992:22). In this sense, then, the essence of organisational culture may be conceived as being the collective construction of organisational realities (*cf.* Sackman 1991:33, 43).

It seems evident that a high degree of appreciation of an organisation's culture may

derive from analysing its tangible and visible rites (Muchinsky 1993:271), or organisational realities. This aspect of organisational culture is also apparent in Schein's more elaborate definition. Unlike Jabes and Zussman (1989:96), Schein's definition takes cognisance of the easily observable features of the phenomenon without neglecting its more subtle and hard to detect traits. He defines organisational culture as:

"... a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein 1990:111).

The latter definition, though somewhat cumbersome, is a more functional one for purposes of this thesis, as it takes into account or infers most of the aspects that are salient to the current thesis. The valuable aspects of Schein's definition may be listed as follows:

- i. It indicates that organisational culture can be invented, discovered, developed and transformed.
- ii. It intimates cognisance of the time element involved in the creation, development and implied transformation of organisational culture.
- iii. It recognises the reciprocal relationship of an organisation to its ambient society; the external adaptation aspect of organisational culture (cf. Daft 1998:369)
- iv. It states specifically that organisational culture can be taught.
- v. It incorporates the important aspects of the definitions cited above, and also accommodates the conceptualising of organisational culture as being the collective construction of organisational realities.
- vi. It intimates much about the weakness or strength of an organisation's culture, which is determined by the length of its shared history, or the intensity and length of shared experiences of its members (Clapper 1995:69). It should be noted that the strength or weakness of an organisation's culture is also a function of the

espousal of its core values, that is, when a large number of members share and are committed to the core values of the organisation, the culture of that organisation will be concomitantly stronger (Robbins 1993:606; Gordon 1991:397).

It is for the above reasons that this definition is adopted for purposes of this thesis.

Schein further conceives of organisational culture as comprising various levels; three to be specific. Daft (1998:368) prefers to divide the construct into two levels; viz. visible artefacts and invisible or underlying values. On consideration of Daft's categorisation it becomes apparent that he includes Schein's third level in his underlying values. The following section represents an explanation of Schein's (and Daft's) levels of organisational culture.

2.10 Levels of organisational culture

Schein (1990:111, 112) holds that an organisation's culture manifests on three levels, as illustrated in figure 2.1.

2.10.1 Level 1 of organisational culture - Observable artefacts

This level comprises observable artefacts such as annual reports, newsletters, statues, wall dividers between workers, and furnishings (*cf.* Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:675). The many titles that exist in government office also betray a deep allegiance to symbols, signs and ceremonies. Artefacts, therefore, are the "... visible and tangible results of activities grounded in the values and basic assumptions" (Klein 1996:326).

2.10.2 Level 2 of organisational culture - Values

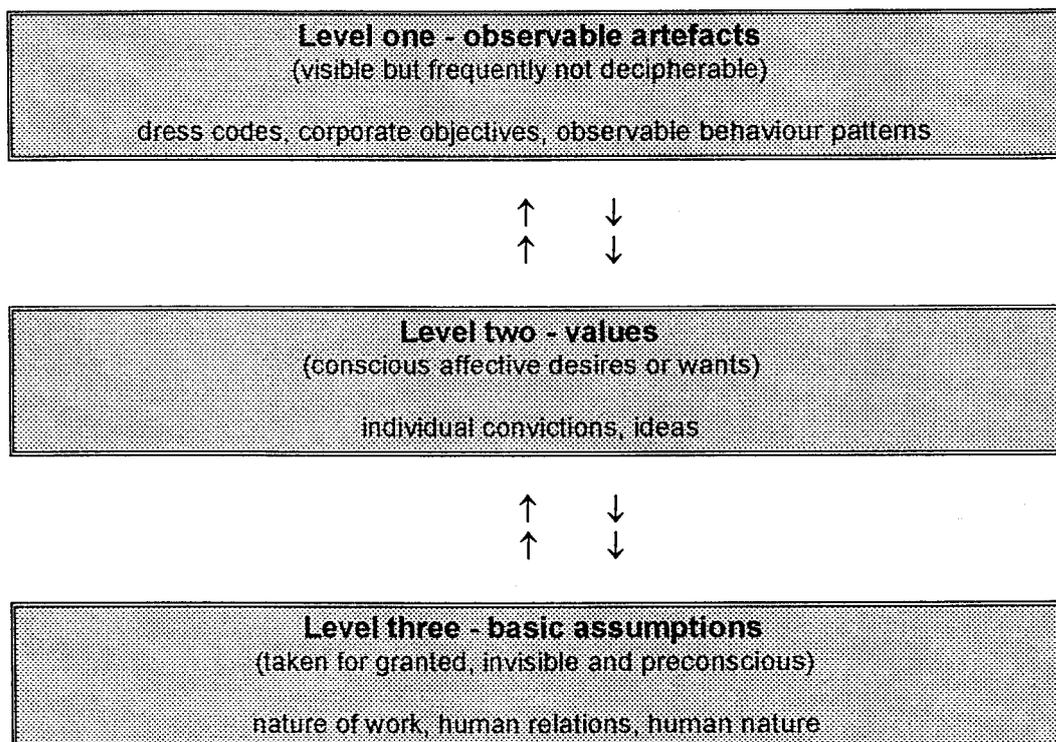
Values are the social principles or standards that have intrinsic worth to the members of

the organisation. These values comprise the beliefs, ideas, and desires individuals and/or groups hold, but that have not been accepted widely enough. In time these values can gain the status of belief, and eventually assumptions (cf. Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:676; Moran & Volkwein 1992:22).

2.10.3 Level 3 of organisational culture - Basic assumptions

Basic assumptions are the assumptions that members of the organisation make that will guide their behaviour. They are widely accepted by members of the organisation, and serve as cues to the members as to how to perceive, think about, and feel about issues such as their work performance, human relations, and their colleagues' work performance (cf. Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:677).

Figure 2.1 Levels of organisational culture and their interaction
(Adapted from Schein 1990:111, 112)



Comparing the three identified levels of organisational culture, it becomes evident that the construct may be divided into its external, obvious, and its subtler, harder to detect properties. Artefacts are the visible and tangible features of organisational culture that arise from values and assumptions; whereas values and assumptions are the subtler, hard to detect features. Values operate on the cognitive level, while assumptions, although deriving from values, motivate from a level of non-cognition. Klein (1996:326) emphasises that the primary difference between values and basic assumptions are that values can be tested while basic assumptions operate on the invisible or non-conscious level.

2.10.4 Synthesis

It needs to be noted that organisational culture is a characteristic of an entire organisation, and not of the individuals within it (Hofstede, Bond & Luk 1993:488). Hence organisational culture can be conceptualised as the *collective*, as opposed to the *individual*, construction of organisational realities. The latter contention points to the fact that organisational culture in the public sector, particularly the maternal holding culture (see 2.11 *infra*), ideally comprises the *core shared values* of the entire public sector social and organisational system; *i.e.* all individuals involved in the public sector, and not of a particular group or individual. This interpretation of organisational culture does not, however, deny the fact that sub-cultures (see 3.2 *infra*) exist in any organisation that may seem to be, or actually are, in conflict with the organisational culture. It recognises that sub-cultures develop, but that sub-cultures, while exercising their peculiarities, will ideally do so while espousing the artefacts, values and basic assumptions of the identified maternal holding culture in order to be considered part of that maternal holding culture (*cf.* Greenberg & Barron 1997:472, 473; 2.11 *infra*). A local government department geographically located away from a related provincial or central government department, for example, will invariably comprise a unique sub-culture of the provincial or central government department, but will primarily have to operate in support of the values and assumptions of the maternal holding culture (see

3.6 *infra*). Therefore, unlike Sackman (1991:27, 28), this thesis endorses a heterogeneous perspective of organisational culture as well as a homogeneity perspective. On considering the South African public service, the inference that surfaces is that because the public service comprises many departments, many cultures, and language groups (see 6.2 *infra*), there needs to be created a core organisational culture based on a set of agreed upon core values if the goals of the *Constitution* as well as those of the Reconstruction and Development Programme are to be achieved. The latter aspects presuppose and determine the role of the body that is tasked to transform the public service, viz. the Department of Public Service and Administration under the political leadership of the Minister of the Public Service and Administration (see 6.3 & 6.7 *infra*).

The creation or adoption of a core or single value system (see 2.10 *supra*, 6.8 *infra*) relevant to the functioning of the transformed South African public service, based upon the hypothesis that a new value system that serves as a single reference point, while allowing for each of the geographical entities that make up the new public service to develop or transform their old and own value systems to fit, or be consistent with, the new value system, is necessary for the proper functioning of a new or transformed South African public service organisational culture (see 3.7 *infra*).

2.11 Maternal holding culture

In anticipation of chapter 6 *infra*, and in the interest of drawing relevant conclusions for this section, it needs to be stated that an essential role for the *DPSA* to play in light of the transformation requirements, is one of establishing a relevant maternal holding culture. The latter refers to the establishment of a core or umbrella culture to which sub-cultures are expected to pledge allegiance and commitment while maintaining a sense of individuality or independence consistent with the goals and functions of the maternal holding culture. This is a presumed requirement of the cooperative government goals of the *Constitution* and the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (South Africa 1995a:ch 3; 1995:26, 27). Latouche (1983:263, quoting

Parsons) concurs with the latter aspect, and states that the value system of the organisation must imply basic acceptance of the more generalised values of the *superordinate system*; a concept synonymous to maternal holding culture. The most essential feature of such a sub-culture (see 3.2 *infra*) is the evaluative legitimation of its place or role within the superordinate system. The statement assumes that the organisation or sub-culture alluded to is probably a decentralised branch of a larger organisation, and possesses its own salient organisational culture, but that it subordinates this to organisational culture of the superordinate system, i.e. the mother organisation. The latter would be akin to the public service of South Africa where the role of the Department of Public Service and Administration assumes a supra-ordinate role in the establishment of value systems compatible with the pursuits of the South African *Constitution*, and the dissemination and monitoring of the latter to the other state departments (RSA 1995:26, 28-36). The other state departments in turn, will ideally be committed to the maternal holding culture while still maintaining and, or developing their own cultures and internal sub-cultures that are not inconsistent with the maternal holding culture (see 6.7 *infra*, cf. 1.7.5 *supra*).

The inference of the above therefore, is that organisational cultures are not monolithic (Ott 1989:45, Sackman 1991:27, 28). They relate closely to, are affected by, and affect sub-cultures and organisational climates.

In the succeeding chapter, attention will be given to the latter constructs in light of the foregoing.

2.12 Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to arrive at an operational definition of the organisational culture construct. In order to arrive at such a definition brief consideration was given to the historical development of Organisational Culture within the context of organisation theory. It was noted that the construct endures a particularly precarious status within organisation theory in general, and within public administration theory and practice. The motive that lay behind the above was to argue for the importance of urgently including a discourse on organisational culture in public administration theory and practice, as a continued exclusion or a cursory treatment of the construct contributes to an indigence of public administration theory and practice.

An analytical review of Organisational Culture literature revealed the major themes of the construct, viz., norms and assumptions. Relative to the latter the contents or elements of organisational culture were reviewed and examples from the South African public service and governance spheres were cited with a view to demonstrating the existence and veracity of the phenomena.

The latter process provided the foundation on which various definitions of organisational culture could be considered analytically. Ultimately a definition of organisational culture, viz., that of Schein, was espoused, and reasons were advanced in an effort to explain why the adopted definition best suites the purposes of this thesis.

It was also pointed out that the construct "Organisational Culture" as used in this thesis primarily refers to the maternal holding culture, but also to the culture inherent in subdivisions or decentralised divisions of organisations. In light of this, the need for the Department of Public Service and Administration to establish a maternal holding culture for the South African public service was briefly addressed. This aspect will be revisited in chapters three and six *infra*, where the context requires it. The need for other state departments to espouse the maternal holding culture while maintaining or developing their unique cultures that are not inconsistent with the maternal holding culture was

also emphasised. More attention will be given to these important aspects in chapter seven.

Further to the above, only perfunctory, but important, reference was made to the relationship between organisational culture and transformation, as more attention will be given to this relationship in chapter four *infra*.

The treatment of the organisational culture perspective in this chapter has inevitably given rise to a need to consider certain related constructs in the next chapter, such as *sub-culture*, *organisation climate*, *interpretive schemes*, *logics of action*, as well as other important constructs. Careful consideration of these will aid towards a better understanding of what organisational culture is and does, as well as how public service transformation cannot successfully be undertaken without specifically giving serious attention to organisational culture. Attending to organisational culture, in its turn, requires proper definition and understanding of the concept and phenomenon. It will be pointed out in chapters six and seven, that the little attention given to organisational culture during the transformation process could be ascribed to a superficial understanding of the phenomenon by the transformation driver and other transformation role players.

2.13 Endnotes

1. This seems to be the approach that the Department of Public Service and Administration has taken in its efforts to transform the South African public service. For further elaboration of this argument see chapters five and six of this thesis.
2. Goodsell (1990:495-509) identifies the other emerging issues that urgently need the attention of public administration theorists and practitioners as:
 - i. **Administrative biography:** Administrative biographies are needed in order to become better acquainted with the past leaders and noteworthy personalities of the field. Such biographies will enable those involved to (a) effectively teach public administration history, theory and practice; (b) concretely convey values in contrast to presenting norms and values as ethical codes and legal precepts; and (c) provide an inspirational component in training programmes in the honest and favourable portrayal of public service and academic careers.
 - ii. **Analysis of analysis:** The latter would involve the inculcating of a sober, self-conscious reflection on all issues of, or pertaining to, public administration, instead of sustaining an uncritical enthusiastic acquisition of new technologies, of organisational aspects, and of socio-technical systems such as financial management systems, and management information systems. Examples such as the evidently uncritical adoption and discarding of financial management systems such as PPBS and Zero-based budgeting systems illustrates Goodsell's point.
 - iii. **Global perspective:** A global perspective in public administration would involve transcending national boundaries in administrative studies and thinking. Such a perspective is particularly imperative taking into account the developments in technology and the impact that it has on societal, political, economical, and environmental subsystems. The application of the systems' approach to Public Administration in textbooks on the subject attests to an awareness of this important perspective. See, for example, the inordinate amount of space (4 chapters) dedicated to the treatment of the systems' perspective in Du Toit DFP and Van der Waldt G, 1997 publication entitled *Public Management - the grassroots* (Kenwyn: Juta).
 - iv. **A teacher of governance:** Public administration should not only involve the implementation of parliamentary legislation in service of executive authorities, but should also include the instruction of society "with respect to both the substantive knowledge and normative ideals of governance" (Goodsell 1990:504). Ideally such teaching would alert society to abstain from focusing on primarily parochial needs, and to accept duties and responsibilities as well as demand rights. The developmental approach that public administration practitioners and, by implication, academics, are required to adopt (South Africa 1996: Chapter 10), necessitates that public administration be a teacher of governance. A particular need in this regard is that an inter-generational ethic be established which emphasises the responsibility of current generations to future generations

CHAPTER THREE: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS

3.1 Introduction

Against the background of the adopted definition of organisational culture (see 2.9 *supra*) and the purpose of this thesis, this chapter will endeavour to elucidate certain phenomena relevant to the organisational culture perspective. The importance of understanding the relationship of sub-cultures to organisational culture becomes particularly relevant when the relationship between the Department of Public Service and Administration as the main driver of public service transformation (South Africa 1995a:6.1, *cf.* 4.5.1.3 *infra*) and the other departments in the South African public service are considered. This interdepartmental relationship will be alluded to in the current chapter, but will receive more attention in chapter six *supra*.

The endeavour of the chapter is to understand the multi-faceted nature of the organisational culture perspective; both on the levels of theory and phenomenon. In this regard two phenomena, *viz.*, *logics of action* and *interpretive schemes* will be explicated, and the relationships to organisational culture will be elucidated. Their importance to the transformation process underway in the South African public service will also be highlighted.

Considering that the primary problem this thesis is investigating is the relationship between transformation and organisational culture, this chapter will also explore the issues involved in changing or transforming organisational culture on the supposition that changes in organisational culture will impact on the transformation process. This information will be useful in exploring and explaining how organisational culture relates to the transformation of the South African public service.

Given the aims of the current chapter, *i.e.*, to elucidate some important phenomena related to organisational culture in order to highlight the multifaceted nature of the organisational culture perspective, a theoretical approach is indicated. In order to achieve the latter purpose, an in depth analysis of the literature on organisational

culture is undertaken, and an effort is made to provide an analytical presentation of the phenomena mentioned above, presenting the findings against the backdrop of the transformation of the South African public service. The latter implies that examples, where applicable, will be cited from the South African public service domain.

In summary, this chapter represents an attempt to establish the significance and value of organisational culture and its accompanying phenomena to specifically public service transformation, in the awareness of the complexities involved due to the nature of organisational culture (see chapter two *supra*) and the lack of representative relevant investigation of the phenomenon (see 1.5).

Attention will first be turned to the explication of *sub-cultures* and *organisation climate* as they relate to organisational culture. The importance of the need to distinguish between the phenomena and of understanding the important associations that exist among them will be pointed out.

3.2 Organisational culture and sub-cultures

Sub-cultures exist in any organisation. Schein (1992:14) sees them as sub-units within the organisation (Jermier, Slocum, Fry & Gaines 1991: 170-175) that hosts the maternal holding culture. These subunits or sub-cultures are produced over time because of normal evolutionary and organisation socialisation processes. This implies that they may be generated organically due to the structure and function of the organisation itself (Brown 1995:28). An example of the latter may be witnessed in the different ways of functioning in a Chemistry department at a university as opposed to a History department. Sub-cultures also evolve due to the internal differentiation of organisations into smaller groups or departments. Think of a personnel department as distinct from a finance department in the same organisation. In this regard Hocking and Carr (1996:79) note that people's occupations are the "... most highly organised, distinctive and pervasive sources of sub-cultures".

Sub-cultures may also be created in the pursuit of specific political or other ideals, for example the creation of the eleven public services, as was the case in South Africa. These public services constituted sub-cultures in relation to the South African public service since they were directed by the latter public service, while allowing them to develop an own unique identity by virtue of its particular ambient environment (see 2.11 *supra*). Sub-cultures may also develop from groups that, for example, perform a similar function, share ethnic or religious backgrounds, serve the same client, have the same professional training, or have the same political affiliation. Ott (1989:46) points out that sub-cultures may overlap, partially coincide, and sometimes conflict. Any particular sub culture may either be compatible with, co-existent with, or in conflict with the maternal holding culture (see 1.7.5 & 2.11 *supra*) and with other sub-cultures within the organisation (Ott 1989:45, 46; Schein 1992:14). An office, unit or department, therefore, may be physically separated from the organisation's main operations. It is likely, due to the separation, to adopt a personality distinct from the maternal holding culture. In such a case the core values may essentially be retained and modified to reflect the separated unit's distinct situation (Robbins 1993: 440, 441; *cf.* Hodge, Anthony & Gales 1996:271). Such a unit, office or department, will exist as a sub-culture of, but distinct from, the maternal holding culture. It will invariably also develop sub-cultures in the same manner as indicated above, of which it will form the maternal holding culture. Consider, for example, the case of the very distinct "personality" of the South African National Defence Force, according to the *Constitution* an integral part of the public service (see South Africa 1993: sec 212(8); 236, 237;), but with a very, and legendary (see 2.8.1.4 *supra*), distinct organisational culture, even though it is, like other public service departments also subject to the *Constitution* (South Africa 1993: sec 4(1) & (2)), and hence, subject to the provisions of the *Constitution*.

When efficiency, effectiveness and common goals are pursued, it is essential to create and maintain harmony between the maternal holding culture and the sub-cultures, and to assure adoption of the values of the maternal holding culture by the sub-cultures. This is important particularly in light of the threat that some sub-cultures may be strong and may be espoused more enthusiastically than the maternal holding culture. In the public service a lack of consistency between the maternal holding culture in relation to that of sub-cultures will bring about that they

work at cross purposes, with resultant problems in the achievement of goals *vis-à-vis* service delivery. Rosell (1999:46, 47) emphasises this need for commitment to shared common values that are essential for the functioning of societal cultures. He states: "... where that shared framework is missing, a fundamental basis for collective action is lost" (Rosell 1999: 46; *cf.* Kim, Pindur, & Reynolds 1995:694). This principle also holds true for organisational cultures and sub-cultures. It is the expressed intention of the Department of Public Service and Administration to establish that "shared framework", in order for all the public service departments to work in a unified manner in order to work in a collective manner in order to pursue its *raison d'être*, viz., the serving of the public in an optimal fashion against the background of limited resources versus unlimited individual and societal needs (South Africa 1995a: 1.1; *cf.* South Africa 1994:3(3)(g)).

3.3 Organisational culture and organisational climate

One of the more perplexing issues in the study and definition of organisational culture is the unfortunate confusion that exists about the relationship between the organisational culture and organisational climate. Denison (1993: 207), for example, points out that many research projects in organisational culture have become indistinguishable from research in organisational climate. In this regard some researchers and commentators regard organisational culture and organisational climate as synonymous (eg. Bate 1984:46; Gordon 1986:103, 104), organisational climate being merely an older term for organisational culture (Hofstede, Bond & Luk 1993:489). Others see the phenomena as being related but entirely separate (Ott 1989:47; Denison 1993:207-210). In concurrence with the latter, Jreisat (1992: 142) points out that while some commentators prefer to refer to "organisational climate" rather than "organisational culture", even the advocates of climate are in general agreement that the construct "organisational culture" represents a "... deeper and more comprehensive set of meanings" than does "organisational climate", and that climate is merely a manifestation of culture.

For purposes of this thesis it is argued that the constructs, while not synonymous, are closely related. The relationship between them can be described as symbiotic. This symbiotic relationship is explained below. The symbiosis metaphor also indicates that the phenomena have life, grow, and change, and is in harmony with the Anthropology image of organisational culture (see 2.6 *supra*). In order to make the distinction between organisational culture and organisational climate clear, a brief definition and explication of organisational climate will be provided.

3.3.1 Defining organisational climate

Since the consensus seems to indicate that organisational climate is a surface manifestation of organisational culture (Jreisat 1992: 142), organisational climate can best be defined at the level of organisational practice, *i.e.*, at the level where the most distinguishable elements of organisational culture may be perceived (Moran and Volkwein 1992:22); *viz.*, level one of organisational culture that comprises observable artefacts such as annual reports, newsletters, job titles, statues, and furnishings (Klein 1996:326, Ivancevich & Matteson 1993:675; 2.10.1 *supra*). The name of the South African Police Service (SAPS), for example was changed from the previous South African Police Force (SAPF); a name change (*artefact*) that was to convey (*climate*) the adoption (see 3.3.5.3 iii, iv *infra*) of a new organisational culture; a new “way of doing things around here”. As Rwelamira (1997:56) points out “(I)n the past, the *police force*, as it was then called, was used more as an instrument to perpetrate violence than as an agent to promote peace” (emphasis supplied). The intention to bring about a change in the police is conveyed by the name change from *force* to *service*.

The problem remains, however, that while organisational climate can best be defined in terms of organisational culture, the lines between the two constructs are bound to become blurred.

Litwin and Stringer (as cited in French 1987:120) define organisational climate as:

*"... the **perceived subjective effects** of the formal system, the informal 'style' of managers, and other important environmental factors on the attitudes, beliefs, values, and motivation of people who work in a particular organisation."*

This definition indicates that while organisational culture refers to the visible patterns of behaviour, the values and the shared assumptions (see 2.10 *supra*), organisational climate refers to the *shared perceptions that prevail about organisational culture*.

To further distinguish between organisational culture and climate, it will be necessary to elaborate on the differences and similarities between the two constructs and related phenomena.

3.3.2 Differences and similarities between organisational culture and organisational climate

Two primary reasons for the confusion between organisational culture and organisational climate may be advanced; viz.:

- i. Researchers and commentators have not adequately defined the terms, with resultant confusion in understanding, lack of distinction, hence inadequate definition. Denison (1993:207), for example, points out that the research of O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell in 1991 was similar to that done by Litwin and Stringer in 1963, yet it was labelled organisational culture and organisational climate respectively.
- ii. Many researchers and commentators have not recognised that the constructs have derived from different academic disciplines, Organisational Climate from Social Psychology, and Organisational Culture from Anthropology and Sociology (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984:193; Moran & Volkwein 1992:35).

In an effort to avoid confusing the constructs and related phenomena, first the differences, and then the similarities will be dealt with.

3.3.2.1 Differences

Moran and Volkwein's (1992:22-35) treatment of the differences between culture and climate has the following inherent points.

i. Endurance

In contrast to the relatively low endurance of organisational climate, organisational culture is a highly enduring characteristic of organisations. This is evident in the fact that surface manifestations can be changed relatively easily, dependent on how successfully or not they reflect the values and basic assumptions of an organisation. It follows, therefore, that if surface manifestations can be changed, that the shared perceptions can be changed. This is not so with the values and underlying assumptions, and hence relates to the level of endurance of the phenomena.

ii. Level of concern

According to Hofstede *et al.* (1993:489) climate has reference to the manner in which employees are treated within a particular organisation; hence a function of the culture of the organisation, while culture itself has reference to the kind of people in terms of race, gender and other character traits that the organisation might employ. On this basis it can be concluded that organisational climate is *primarily* a concern of the lower and intermediate levels of management, while organisational culture is a *primary* concern of top management (Hofstede *et al.* 1993:489). Top management are the ones that decide on the strategic direction of the organisation, determine and communicate the value systems and other organisational cultural aspects

based on their interpretation of the organisational ambient environment. This, of course, is not a denial of the role of the lower levels of management, nor of the functional employees in the determination of organisational culture, but simply an acknowledgement of the higher impact of management on the latter. Lower levels of management are more involved in the management of the proper execution of the policies that reflect a particular organisational culture. The elevated role of leaders in relation to organisational culture is emphasised by Schein in his publication *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (1985). Brown (1995:141) also recognises the important role that leadership plays in this regard (see 4.9 ii, iv and v *infra*). The strategic direction of the public service as well as the methods for the achievement of the strategic goals are stipulated in the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995:2.2, 5.1). The *White Paper*, aware of the role of leadership and management stipulates who should be the drivers of the process (1995: chapter 6); the main driver for the management of the process being the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (1995: 6.1.1; *cf.* 4.10).

iii. **Evolution**

The endurance of organisational culture results from its slow evolution over a long period of time, whereas climate forms much more quickly, although it evolves from some of the same elements as culture. It is evident from 3.3.2.1 ii that climate forms from and within an existing organisational culture (*cf.* Denison 1993:207).

iv. **Change**

While climate forms more swiftly than culture, it is evident that it alters more quickly as well. This indicates that culture is much more enduring than climate, but it does not imply that climate is entirely transient.

v. **Manifestation**

Climate primarily manifests at *level one* of the organisational culture (observable artefacts) but also at *level two* (values and related attitudes) (see 2.10 supra; cf. Brown 1995:2). In addition to manifestation on these levels, culture also manifests at the level of basic assumptions, viz., *level three* of organisational culture. In agreement with this, Muchinsky (1993:403) asserts that '(c)ulture is regarded as an emergent property of group interactions, whereas climate refers more to people's reactions to those interactions'. By virtue of its more overt manifestation, climate lends itself to direct observation, is more easily measured and, for these reasons, has been subjected to research much earlier and longer than culture (Schein 1990: 109; Hofstede *et al.* 1993:489).

vi. **Existence**

Climate may be considered a component, an element, or a surface manifestation of organisational culture (3.3.1). Moran and Volkwein (1992:22) see the clearest relationship between the two constructs in the influence organisational culture exerts in forming organisational climate. It can be expected, for example, that the efforts of the transformation drivers to make the public service more representative of the countries' population through affirmative action (South Africa 1993: Section 212(2)(b) and Schedule 4 Principle XXX; South Africa 1995a: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3; South Africa 1996: 195(1)(i)), clearly a value aspect (level 2 of organisational culture), would in time reflect a completely different organisational climate in terms of the superficial manifestations of the public service. Organisational culture influences organisational climate.

It is also true that historically commentators and researchers were earlier aware of the phenomenon of organisational climate. Organisational culture, on the other hand, by virtue of its partially covert and implicit nature, has come to the attention of researchers only relatively recently (Schein 1990:109).

While a number of differences between organisational culture and organisational climate may be identified, there are also important similarities that have to be noted. These will be considered next.

3.3.2.2 Similarities

While it is possible to distinguish between organisational culture and climate, it should be pointed out that the constructs are related in at least two important ways:

i. Manifestation

The phenomena are both constituent elements of the "... expressive, communicative, socially-constructed dimensions of organisations" (Moran & Volkwein 1992:35). Climate is essentially a more visible element of organisations, while culture is essentially more implicit, and not as overt.

ii. Dependence

Organisational culture brings strong influence to bear on determining the constituent attitudes and practices of organisational climate. As pointed out above, climate is a component of organisational culture, "... a surface manifestation of culture" (Schein, 1990:109).

Having considered organisational culture in relation to related constructs such as sub-cultures and organisational climate, attention will now be given to the process of the changing of organisational culture. The primary hypothesis of this thesis states that organisational culture holds the key to successful transformation of the South African public service; hence it is important to consider how organisational culture can be changed. Changes in organisational culture will impact upon, and bring about changes in organisation climate, therefore, the comments about how to

change organisational culture apply similarly to changing organisation climate, based on the hypothesis that a change in the value systems, basic assumptions and artefacts of an organisation will bring about a change in the organisational climate.

3.4 Utility of organisational climate

Denison (1993:210), after researching both organisational culture and organisational climate in depth, and highlighting the problems encountered in the understanding of the constructs and phenomena, concludes "... both perspectives, taken together, are necessary for a full understanding of (organisational culture)". Hence, while the careful researcher may be able to observe, study, and understand organisational culture on its own, the danger exists that he/she might be observing organisational climate, a surface manifestation of organisational culture, and not organisational culture *per se*. It is thus important to distinguish between the phenomena. In addition to the above the following utilities of organisational climate may be pointed out.

- i. Organisational climate provides a sense of the organisation as it constitutes a surface manifestation of organisational culture.
- ii. Being intimately related to organisational culture, a careful explication thereof serves to aid the comprehension of organisational culture.
- iii. It assists in understanding the difficulties that accompany the changing of organisational culture, in the sense that it is understood that mere manipulations of surface manifestations of culture does not necessarily mean that organisational culture has changed at all. While changes in climate do not bring about a change in organisational culture, it is true that changes in the organisational culture will cause the climate to change.

3.5 Changing organisational culture

The major catalyst that may precipitate change of organisational culture and climate is when the shared values and assumptions serve as obstacles in the achievement of organisational goals and *raison d'être* (Robbins, 1993:610, 625). Chapter 4 (4.2 *infra*), points out that the reasons why transformation has been undertaken in many countries have been related to concerns about the non-achievement of organisational goals and efficiency. This is particularly due to fact that organisations have to function in rapidly and constantly changing environments. The South African public service, for example, evinces such changes, where the public service of the former apartheid establishment has to be changed and a new organisational culture be established (South Africa 1994c:11), as many of the shared values and assumptions of the former, such as discrimination, exclusive labour practices, among others, are hindering the advancement of the envisaged new public service which pursues, among other goals, representativeness and inclusive development of all South African citizens (South Africa 1995a: 5.1; Sawyer, 1995:14; Skweyiya 1995; Ramaphosa 1996: 18; *cf.* 4.5.1.2 *infra*).

Research indicates that there exist many problems that lurk in the wake of changing the culture of an organisation. Attention will now be turned to the more prominent of these problems.

3.5.1 Problems related to managing and changing organisational culture

Any change in organisational culture is bound to be rather difficult. This section will initially deal with the problem of management capacity in relation to organisational culture, then it will turn to other related problems important to take cognisance of.

3.5.1.1 Management capacity

It is important to emphasise the need for capacity of management or drivers of organisational culture transformation since addressing this aspect will also address

the other challenges and problems to a large degree. The United States General Accounting Office (GAO, cited in Cooper, Brady, Hidalgo-Hiardeman, Hyde, Naff, Ott, & White 1998: 257, 258) found that successful organisational culture change is premised upon the total commitment and ability of the change leaders. Effective change leaders are required to possess not only ability, but clear vision as to the direction that organisational culture change will take.

Regarding leadership and management capacity, Burack (1991: 88, 89) states that many managers have only vague or differing ideas about what organisational culture entails. Concurring with Burack, Wilson (1993: 49) avers that even where the organisational culture is understood and recognised, there may exist an underestimation of the difficulties of achieving organisational culture change. Schein (1985: 48), in a supportive view, states:

“... our intuitive understanding (of organisational culture) often leads to gross oversimplification and outright misunderstanding of cultural phenomena, making our efforts at intervention ineffective or harmful. Therefore, we must also make an effort to understand more precisely what we are dealing with when we deal with cultural phenomena.” (emphasis supplied).

As pointed out, the understanding and articulation of organisational culture and the changing thereof is primarily the responsibility of informed and capable leadership. It will be indicated from considering the execution of the transformation priorities (see 6.4 & 6.9.2 *infra*) that leadership capacity relating specifically to the organisational culture perspective and to the change of the latter seems to have been limited. The *Presidential Review Commission*, for example, consistently reported a lack of managerial capacity in all facets relating to transformation of the public service, particularly relating to changing the organisational culture of departments (see, for example, South Africa 1998: 4.2.2).

3.5.1.2 General problems and challenges

Change leaders need to take specific note of the fact that cultures are essentially resistant to change (Robbins, 1993:625). Kim *et al.* (1995:695) emphasise that little

change in organisational culture will occur without management directly intervening to overcome resistance to change, and to provide clear motivation for why change is imperative. Considering transformation of the South African public service, the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (1994: 3.1.2 (a) & (b)) expresses the fear of and resistance to change as two of the major challenges it faces in driving the transformation process. Ivancevich and Matteson (1993:678-683) alert to the following reasons why it is not easy to change organisational culture:

- i. The elusiveness of culture makes it difficult for it to be sufficiently analysed, defined, managed, and therefore to be changed. This is due to the difficulty in clearly conceptualising an organisation's culture, and the confusion that arises between culture and climate (see 3.3.1 & 3.3.2 *supra*). Jreisat (1997: 188) contends that "... culture is not a single variable that can be defined, isolated, measured, and controlled, nor is it a concrete act to observe and monitor ... (cultures) are ubiquitous, (touching) every aspect of operations and people"
- ii. Due to the latter, any deliberate effort to change organisational culture is likely to be fraught with unanticipated difficulties.

Culture provides continuity and stability in organisations. It stands to reason, therefore, that attempts to change organisational culture will meet with much resistance and opposition. A possible explanation for resisting organisational culture transformation in the South African public service, as research by Wessels and Viljoen (1992: 198-217); and Wessels (1994: 193-202) indicates, is the uncertainty among some public officials regarding their future in a transformed public service; clearly a threat to their future stability and job security that seemed guaranteed under apartheid. Kets De Vries & Balazs (1999: 640-675; *cf.* Westley 1990: 273-293) in their clinical studies relating to change confirms that people experience change as very traumatic, and hence resist change, not only due to political reasons, but also due to clinical and psychological threats that they may experience; in ostensibly confirmation of Wessels & Viljoen (1992: 198-217). They state:

"People have a tendency to hold on to dysfunctional patterns, illogical as these may appear to others. They cannot change their perspective on life without expending a great deal of effort. The reason that people cling so tenaciously to the status quo is not easy to determine. There are many conscious and unconscious obstacles on the path toward change. To many, the rallying cry seems to be, 'Better dead than changed.'"

- iii. Resistance to change also relates to the embeddedness of organisational culture, *i.e.*, how strong or weak a culture is. As pointed out at 2.9 (vi) *supra*, the strength or weakness of the culture of an organisation is a function of the espousal of its core values. Based on the latter, it seems that the more the core values are espoused, the more the espousers will resist the transformation or change of that culture. Stackelberg (Online) warns that individual and group resistance can lead to organisational resistance to change. The transformation of the South African public service evinces a resistance to change due to ideological opposition that, in some cases, ostensibly lead to deliberate efforts to sabotage the transformation process (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.2(b)). Lekota (2000) laments that this is decidedly the case in the in the South African Defence fraternity.

A strong issue that flies in the face changing organisational culture is the fact that organisations may, and invariably do, have more than one culture in operation (Robbins, 1993:605, 606; *cf.* 3.2 and 3.3 *supra*). Tustin (1993:1) indicates that this is also true of organisational climate. It needs to be noted, then, that reference to organisational culture and climate is reference to the *dominant* culture and climate in the organisation; *i.e.* the culture and climate that reflect the "... core values that are shared by a majority of the organisation's members" (Robbins, 1993:625). When considering the dominant culture in this thesis, it is referred to as the *maternal holding culture* (see 2.11 *supra*). Nevertheless, sub-cultures do influence the behaviour of the members of an organisation, and must, therefore, be taken into account when efforts are made to change organisational culture.

Schein (1990:117) opines that the existence of sub-cultures may aid the change process due to the fact that new leaders that best represent the new direction into

which the organisation needs to go can be recruited from the sub-cultures (*cf.* 3.4.1 (iv) *supra*). The concomitant is also true, viz., that strong sub-cultures may, and often do, exist that make the pursuit of the new organisational value system extremely difficult as they are in support of old or existing interpretive schemes and logics of action (see 3.5 and 3.6 *infra*), and hence will be resistant to change. Louw 1994: 2), reporting on the resistance that senior public officials brought to bear on the *Transitional Executive Council*, the body that was mandated to prepare the South African society for the first democratic elections in 1994, recounts that:

"A senior official conceded in private this week that the TEC has executive powers but lacks administrative capability. We are dependent on civil servants for the execution of decisions taken by the council. In many cases they are either indifferent or hostile towards the TEC".

Clearly the latter citation indicates the impact that a powerful sub-culture might have on the transformation of organisational culture, albeit negatively or positively.

Related to the above is the degree of strength or weakness of organisational culture and climate (Robbins, 1993:606). The stronger the organisational culture, *i.e.*, the more organisational members who espouse the core values, the more difficult it will be to change it (see 3.4.1.iv *supra*).

Bearing in mind the above and other obstacles that may retard change in organisational culture and climate, it needs to be noted they can be changed, although the process of change may be time-consuming and expensive (*cf.* Jreisat 1997:188).

3.5.2 Favourable circumstances for changing organisational culture

According to Robbins (1993:625, 626) change in organisational culture is most likely to take place under the following circumstances:

i. **Dramatic crisis**

A dramatic crisis occurs when the *status quo* is challenged and the current culture is called into question. The South African situation *vis-à-vis* government organisations as well as civil society currently face this kind of dramatic crisis due to rapid political and social change.

ii. **Change in leadership**

A change in leadership may bring in its wake alternative and different core values. The Government of National Unity in South Africa with the dominant African National Congress ruling party has espoused a new set of core values as reflected in the *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (ANC 1994; South Africa 1994) which is in stark contrast to the exclusive apartheid policies advocated and practised by the previous government. This fact, along with issues such as an emphasis on the respect for and promotion of human rights, establish the requirement for radical change in the functioning of the public service.

iii. **Young and small organisations**

Younger organisations will have less established organisational cultures, and will therefore take to change more easily. This is so due to the fact that culture in an organisation takes a long time to become entrenched (Robbins & Coulter 1999: 393); hence it takes a long time for cultures to become strong; *i.e.*, well supported. The weaker the culture, *i.e.*, the fewer people who espouse its values and basic assumptions, the easier it is to change the organisational culture. Concomitantly, the more widely held a culture is, and the more the organisational values are espoused by members of the organisation, the more difficult it will be to change (Robbins 1990: 458, 459). These aspects portend negatively for changing the inherited South African public service organisational culture, as it has become established over at

least four centuries, and particularly entrenched over the last five decades of National Party rule (see chapter 5 *infra*), and it is characteristically and typically very large; currently comprising an amalgam, due to the rationalisation process, of at least eleven public services employing approximately 1.2 million public officials (see chapter 4.5.2). Until late 1994 the public service was characterised by a strong culture of apartheid and discrimination, a culture diametrically opposed to the envisioned culture of inclusiveness, representativeness and service delivery based on equity and development. This organisational culture is specifically the target of change as determined by the 1993 *Constitution* and the *RDP*. Based on the argument of this section, it can be expected that the public sector culture is not easily amenable to change (Cummings & Worley 1996: 534; Alexiou 1996: Online).

iv. **Weak cultures**

Weak organisational cultures are more agreeable and responsive to change than are strong cultures (see 3.4.1.iv; 3.4.2.iii). The general disenchantment with apartheid as a viable government and public sector policy in a milieu of global and popular ostensible democracy effectively weakens any remaining support for its core values, and constrains those who still hope to maintain it to change. The deep seatedness of the latter government and public sector policy, however, in many sectors provide much resistance (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.2 (a) and (b)). It is said, for example, that the South African military establishment to a large extent still reflects apartheid values and practices more than five years after the first democratic elections in South Africa (Lekota 2000).

While an awareness of the above aspects are likely to aid the agent of change in the change process, this awareness does not guarantee successful organisational culture change. Any change process will encounter much resistance, as has been pointed out above (*cf.* Wessels & Viljoen 1992:198-217; Wessels 1994:193-202; Louw 1994:2; *cf. Public Servant* 1995:8, 21). The resistance can to a large extent be

ascribed to the uncertainty that it brings about among those affected. Barrett (1992: 369) points out that "in situations of uncertainty, people tend to seek ways of minimising their personal insecurity; either by putting pressure on senior managers to giving clear lead, or by 'digging in' and holding on to the familiar, even if it is unsatisfactory". In light of this, change drivers should be aware that ostensible hostility and resistance to change might reflect feelings of insecurity, as much as genuine conflicts of interest.

The change driver should also be aware of the fact that in the changing of culture much time must be allotted to the process. This is due to the fact that the more entrenched a culture has become over time, the more difficult it will be to change it, hence the more time will be needed to change it. The presence of a large number of sub-cultures, which can be expected to be typical of large organisations, such as is the public service, will also tend to be sources of resistance to change. The necessity of culture change in relation to transformation, due to the factors described in chapter four *infra* (see 4.2-4.4; 4.10), makes it imperative that the public manager tasked with driving the transformation process also be aware of how to change organisational culture. The latter will be the focus of the next section.

3.5.3 The change process

According to findings by analysts of the United States General Accounting Office (Cooper, *et al* 1998:257, 258) an additional aspect to highlight in organisational culture change, other than management capacity, is the provision of training that promotes the development of skills related to the desired values and beliefs. It stands to reason that individuals and groups that are newly exposed to an existing or changing organisational culture will have to learn about the new values that they have to adopt, and how to transform the new values that they are required to espouse into the values in practice. In addition to the latter two foundational techniques several other techniques are identified; *i.e.*:

- i. The management of the organisation must take the lead in announcing the need for, and possibility of change of culture, and the threats that may exist if change is resisted (Cullen 1987: 10, 11; Schein 1990:117; Kim *et al* 1995:680; Hambrick, Nadler, & Tushman 1998: 300-302). In the South African public sector the need for change has been widely proclaimed by, among others, the President and the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (See chapters five and six *infra*), and generally embraced with enthusiasm by particularly the black population who see the new South African government and the new public service as the solution for, among other things, the malady of apartheid service delivery (see 5.4 *infra*).
- ii. Creating and communicating new sources of organisational culture; *i.e.*, new symbols, stories, rituals, and artefacts to undergird the new assumptions that are to be espoused (Schein 1990:117; Robbins 1993:626). The focus here is particularly on the more visible aspects of organisational culture, *i.e.*, a concentration on level one of organisational culture (2.10.1). The symbols, stories, rituals, among others, allow employees and observers to gain an understanding of the new values and basic assumptions, and hence the new direction of the organisation.
- iii. Rewarding and encouraging organisational members who espouse new values and assumptions, punishing those who adhere to the old, and compelling and coaxing those who are ambivalent into following the new order (Cullen 1987: 10-19; Schein 1990:117; Robbins 1993:626; Quah 1996: 294-312).
- iv. Adapting socialisation processes to fit the new values and assumptions (Robbins 1993:627). The importance of the latter point is underscored by Quah (1996:300, 301). In the transformation process undertaken in the Singaporean public service during the late 1950's and 1960's evidence indicated that where an incoming government's political ideology is opposed by the majority of the incumbent public servants, it is important to provide a "heavy dose of political socialization to orientate their values so as to make them more consistent with those of the new government" (Quah 1996: 301).

Based on the challenges faced in transforming the South African public service (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.2 (a) & (b)), the importance of recognising the need for such socialisation is imperative.

- v. Deriding and discrediting the old cultural values and assumptions. Also symbolically and perhaps physically removing or destroying artefacts associated with the latter (Schein 1990:117). The recent official removal of statues in the Free State, ostensibly had as its primary motivation the spurning of the old apartheid culture as these statues were ostensibly not representative of the new, inclusive democratic values espoused by the new government (*cf.* Waugh 1995: 13).
- vi. Destroying the old culture and sub-cultures by extensive job rotation (Robbins 1993:627). The implementation of affirmative action policies in the South African public service has as its primary motivation the changing of the composition of the public service in line with the Constitutional imperative of broad representativity of South African society (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b); South Africa 1997: 195(1)(i); South Africa 1997a: 9; 6.4.1, 6.4.1.1, & 6.8 *infra*). These changes anticipate a change in organisational culture, as new values and basic assumptions will predominate.
- vi. Creating a high level of trust by encouraging employee participation (Robbins 1993:626).
- vii. Sterner measures may need to be taken, such as "destroying" (dismissing) primary culture carriers who find it difficult to change their basic assumptions, and starting afresh with a new group, forming a culture characterised by the value systems and basic assumptions dictated by the new direction. The Singaporean transformation cited above (3.4.3 vi) required the dismissal of large numbers of English public servants inherited from the previous Singaporean public service, ostensibly because they were either unwilling or unable to adapt to the new value systems of the new government. The recent controversial dismissal of a high ranking public official by the Minister of Public Works was allegedly a result of the official not being willing to, or

capable of, espousing the new public service organisational culture (Bezuidenhout 1995:7; Financial Mail: Online). In 1996 the then premier of Mpumalanga, Mr Matthews Phosa determined to persuade the ANC parliamentary caucus to remove all National Party public officials from the public sector on the basis that they would not be able to serve the interest of the new government (Own Correspondent 1996:3).

It is evident from the above procedures that any change process in the organisational setting is bound to be traumatic, and should not be taken lightly or without broad consultation. Changing organisational culture should also not be misconstrued as suggesting that the change process intends to create organisations that endeavour to employ groups of alike-thinking and behaving automatons. What is intended is that transformation of the public service organisational culture should result in the adoption of a new maternal holding culture (see 2.11 *supra*) espoused by all public officials, but that allows for the establishment and organic growth of several sub-cultures. Ideally, these sub-cultures should subscribe to and support the maternal holding culture. Rosell (1999: 46) articulates the latter as follows:

"There is no need for people to practice the same religion, eat the same food, or dance the same dances. They can maintain their own sub-cultures, or heritages, so long as they accept an overarching shared framework (read "maternal holding culture"). Where that shared framework is missing, a fundamental basis for collective action is lost."

It will be noted (see 4.9.1) that the organisational culture change process parallels the organisational transformation process. In the cited section the organisational transformation process is applied to the transformation process underway in the South African public service by means of transformation examples from the latter.

In addition to organisational climate and sub-cultures, there are other important constructs intimately linked to a better understanding of the organisational culture construct. The constructs pertinent to the aims of, and intentions with, this thesis are *logics of action and interpretive schemes*.

3.6 Logics of action and interpretive schemes

The reason for treating the two mentioned aspects is based on the fact that an approach to organisational culture from a single perspective ignores or distorts crucially important aspects of the phenomenon as it manifests in different organisations. For example, efforts to transform organisational culture by merely introducing new values without attending to the necessary inculcation of the values may bring about that the espoused values never become the values in practice because the interpretive schemes that the values logically assume may not have been learned or adopted. Such instances have been noted in the some national departments (see 6.4.1.6 *infra*). Ginger (1998: 750), aware of this problem, states: "... a multi-perspective approach to organisational culture can provide a fuller understanding of policy implementation and change." Based on the latter argument, the following utilities of a multi-perspective approach can be hypothesised:

- i. A multi-perspective approach will obviously aid in a better understanding of the behaviour manifestations in different organisations.
- ii. Such an approach is also invaluable in organisational culture analysis, as it contributes to a more complete understanding than that provided by a single perspective approach.
- iii. Since a multi-perspective approach requires the explication of facets that are less obvious, it, in addition, requires the development of organisational culture lexicon to creatively explain less obvious phenomena. The importance of this for a neglected field of study and research (see 2.6 *supra*) is evident, since it aids in articulating aspects that could otherwise not be expressed given the limits of language inherent in the definition of organisational culture (see 2.9).

In light of the above, and in pursuit of a better understanding and explication of organisational culture, attention will now be turned to an explanation of *logics of action* and *interpretive schemes*.

3.6.1 Logics of action

In order to understand the transformation process it is necessary to consider both the micro-political exchange processes within organisations as well as the macro environmental changes that often trigger transformations. The internal micro-political exchange process is concerned with the relationships, processes, and strategies that exist and take place within the organisation as efforts are made to synchronise all resources in pursuit of its goals. The macro environmental changes and aspects pertain to the influences that the external environment exercise on the way things are done within the organisation, recognising that any organisation is continually dependent upon inputs from the environment (*cf.* Schwella, Burger, Fox & Müller 1996: 13-25).

In this regard it needs to be emphasised that organisations, public or private, exemplify reciprocal social exchange relationships based on dependence (Evan 1993:8-11). The contingency relationship comes about due to the fact that organisations are not self-sufficient, and hence cannot generate all the necessary resources autonomously. The outcomes of any organisations' actions are thus also conditional upon what other actors within its environment do or do not do. Each party that forms part of this reciprocal relationship has particular needs and goals, and concomitant peculiar means for achieving its goals and satisfying its needs. These ends and means are premised upon a general logical or cognitive framework that guides the behaviour of each party. Bacharach, Bamberger and Sonnenstuhl (1996:477-506) refer to such frameworks as "logics of action". Thus each party has a particular logic or logics of action that guides its particular behaviour.

3.6.1.1 Definition of logics of action

As intimated above, logics of action may be interpreted as the perceived relationship between means and ends underlying the specific actions, policies, and activities of organisational members as individuals or acting as groups. Group formation and group action comes about by virtue of mutually shared fields developed through

socialisation processes and regular interaction (*cf.* Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly 1997:203). Logics of action have also been characterised as the more normative, cultural, sociological, and less economic component that actors bring to an exchange relationship (DiMaggio, as cited in Bacharach *et al* 1996:478). In that sense it can be regarded as a set of convictions (group-think; see Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly 1997:209, 210) regarding specific ends, as well as the means towards the specified ends. It should also be pointed out, logics of action are analogous to organisational culture (*cf.* 2.9, and 3.5 *supra*), and are regarded in this thesis as an important facet of the multifaceted organisational culture construct.

When two or more parties interact, they are likely to bring to the interaction at least two different logics of action; *i.e.* their different ends and their idiosyncratic means of pursuing and achieving those ends. Exchange is difficult or even impossible unless the logics of action of the parties involved in the interaction are, or become, aligned (Bacharach, *et al* 1996:478). It is evident, then, that non-aligned logics of action are either conflicting or mutually exclusive. Either way, in the latter cases exchange relationships and mutual goal achievement are made either impossible or, at the very least, improbable, and difficult. Alignment therefore means that the logics of action of the parties in the exchange relationships, or goal achievement, while not the same, are *not inconsistent* with one another. Bacharach *et al* (1996:478, 479) explain that alignment of logics of action occurs when "... party A's means do not logically prevent the pursuit of party B's ends and that party B's ends do not prevent the pursuit of party A's means". This implies that although the different parties may have different logics of action, the alignment of their logics of action allows for mutual dependency, and ensures the possibility of exchange relationships.

As an important aspect of organisational culture, logics of action implies that organisational cultures of the parties involved in an organisational relationship are aligned, recognising mutual dependency, and ensuring possibility of exchange relationships. Such alignment of logics of action carries implications for inter- and intra-governmental relationships, since public service departments have a single *raison d'être*, namely optimal service to the public against the background of limited resources. Unaligned logics of action may bring about conflicts in inter- and intra-governmental relations, which will invariably impact on optimal service delivery.

The logics of action construct holds important implications for the roles of the Department of Public Service and Administration in the establishment of a new maternal holding culture *vis-à-vis* other public service departments; viewed as sub-cultures of the latter maternal holding culture. It needs to be emphasised that every department, while forming a distinct sub-culture, also forms a maternal holding culture in its own right in relation to the sub-cultures that form or become established in that particular department. The task of the management cadre is, therefore, always to pursue alignment of logics of action among all relationships that may exist or form in the process of the organisation performing its various functions.

3.6.2 Interpretive schemes

Interpretive schemes can be defined as "... the cognitive schemata that map our experience of the world, identifying both its relevant aspects and how we are to understand them" (Bartunek 1984: 355, 365). Operationally, interpretive schemes can be said to be the shared fundamental, though often implicit, suppositions about why events happen as they do and how people are to act in different situations. Interpretive schemes are expressed in "... provinces of meaning" which represent the values, desired ends, preferences and interests of an organisation (Bartunek 1984:365). Thus, when the values, desired ends, preferences and interests of an organisation change; presumably due to a new vision that results from a new understanding of, and response to shifts or changes in the ambient environment (see 5.2.2.2 *infra*), the interpretive scheme of the organisation and of the individuals functioning in the organisation, will of necessity undergo change. Put differently, if organisational culture changes due to the introduction of new values, concomitant changes in interpretive schemes can be expected.

Such change in interpretive schemes may be of the *first* - or *second* order type (see 4.11.1.1 *infra*). As will be explained (see 4.11.1.1. *infra*), fundamental shifts in the strategy and mission of the organisation is a manifestation of *second order* change, resulting in discontinuous change of interpretive schemes, while the modification of aspects such as work procedure, and recruitment and promotion policies, with a view

to the better implementation of organisation strategy, illustrates *first order* change, with mere incremental changes in the interpretive schemes.

A careful reading and interpretation of the construct "interpretive schemes" reveals its similarity to the definition of facets of organisational culture (see 2.9 *supra*), and also exposes its relation to the logics of action construct (see 3.5.1 *supra*). Like logics of action, this construct is an important facet of the multifaceted culture construct. This illustrates the fact that any given experience or phenomenon may be understood in multiple ways, and that it is therefore a fallacy and misleading to use any particular construct that is related to other constructs as if no such relationship(s) exists. Consider, for example, the different uses of the concept "democracy". Upon reflection it is evident that the application of the concept by Cloete (1972:24; *cf.* Cloete 1992: 68) to the previous South African regime is vastly different from the application and meaning currently in vogue in South Africa (see South Africa 1996: section 1). It also illustrates the richness of the organisational culture construct in terms of its different facets (3.5 *supra*), and the need for tolerance *vis-à-vis* the many different operational definitions of the construct (see 2.9 *supra*), allowing for the use of different explanatory constructs as determined by the facet of organisational culture being explained (*cf.* Newhouse & Chapman 1996:996). The same argument holds for the definition and explanation of transformation and its many related constructs, e.g., rationalisation, reform, and restructuring. See 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 *infra* in the latter regard. The above does not, however, detract from the need to clearly define and explain the usage of constructs *vis-à-vis* a specifically defined context; neither does it construe a denial of the need for explaining as clearly as possible particular contextually determined relationships.

Changes in interpretive schemes resulting from changes in organisational culture, will of necessity influence the relationship between one organisation and another, as a change in interpretive scheme will invariably impact upon the logics of action of organisations, and determine the alignment of logics of action between them. An example of the latter is evinced in South African private sector and government relationships. The introduction of new values by the new government has challenged employment policies of many private sector organisations; in turn challenging their alignments of logics of action.

3.7 Synthesis

In light of the above the relationships of organisational culture, logics of action, and interpretive schemes may succinctly be depicted as follows:

- i. *Organisational culture* = The way "... we do things around here" based on specific sets of artefacts, value systems, and assumptions espoused.
- ii. *Logics of action* = The thinking or cognitive processes informed by specific value systems, understanding of artefacts, and assumptions that determine the way "... we do things around here" relative to organisational goals.
- iii. *Interpretive schemes* = How the values, understanding of artefacts, and assumptions inform the interpretation within specific provinces of meaning that inform the way "... we do things around here".

Hence any process of transformation or change of culture (including logics of action and interpretive schemes) will be determined and be driven by the particular value system, interpretation of the artefacts, and assumptions it is premised upon.

Having considered the richness of organisational culture in detail by having given attention to some of the more salient constructs associated with it; including sub-cultures, organisational climate, logics of action and interpretive schemes, it is important, for the sake of theory development, to attend to the issue of approaches to organisational culture.

For purposes of this section, approaches are aids to understanding and managing complex and sophisticated concepts and related phenomena; hence, they can contribute towards the comprehension and perception of concepts or phenomena that are abstract and hence difficult to manage (*cf.* Bullock & Stallybrass 1997: 394, 395). Approaches must not be regarded as perfectly accurate or absolute descriptions of observed realities (*cf.* Heady 1979:13). To an extent the concept "approach", as used in the ensuing sections, approximates the concept "model",

which Waldo (as cited in Heady 1979:13) defines as "... simply the conscious attempt to develop and define concepts, or clusters of related concepts, useful in classifying data, describing reality and (or) hypothesising about it." It is against the backdrop of the latter understanding that the following sections are presented.

3.8 Identifying and choosing a public service organisational culture approach

The Department of Public Service and Administration has the mandate to drive the transformation of the public service and to establish a new organisational culture for the South African public service (South Africa 1993: Section 212(2)(b); Schedule 4- Principle XXX; South Africa 1993: 10, 11; South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1; South Africa 1996: sect. 195). By any standards this is a daunting task, particularly taking into account the many influential variables, including those identified at 3.2 to 3.7 *supra*.

It has to be noted that choosing a public service approach to organisational culture is invariably a political decision (see Latouche 1983:268; Hojnacki 1996:137-164; Skweyiya 1998) based on, and designed to achieve, the intents and ideologies of the government in power. The approach chosen will therefore of necessity reflect the ideologies of the government of the day (*cf.* 5.4; 5.6 *infra*). The strategic goals and ideals that provide the *raison d'être* for the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU), particularly as reflected in the *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (South Africa 1994: 1.1-1.5 & preface) and adopted as the policy framework of the GNU (South Africa 1994: preamble, 2.1.2) serves as an example. The *RDP* articulates the ideals and direction of the new government. The broad values that the *RDP* expresses particularly for the public service are also reflected in Chapter 10 of the 1996 *Constitution* (South Africa 1996: section 195). It can be anticipated, therefore, that the culture approach espoused by the Department of Public Service and Administration (*DPSA*) as drivers of public service transformation, should reflect the ideologies of government.

3.8.1 Importance of choosing a particular approach to organisational culture

The importance of choosing a particular approach to organisational culture is accentuated by the fact that the managerial view of steering organisations is under constant scrutiny and criticism (Smircich 1983: 339-358; Sinclair 1989:82; Fox & Miller 1995:3-6; White & Jacques 1995:45, 46; see 2.2.1.1 *supra*). Sinclair (1991:321), for example, contends that the managerial view, which implies that management is the sole influential and control agent of the culture of an organisation is fatally flawed in that it presupposes an organisational micro-environment independent of its ambient macro-environment. It is important, in light of the stated criticism, to consider other and more relevant approaches to organisational culture, and their concomitant implications for organisational culture control and change.

Sinclair (1991:321-332) analyses alternative approaches to organisational culture, and in particular, considers how these approaches can be applied to the public sector. She argues, as this thesis does, that organisational culture contributes to organisational effectiveness and efficiency through fostering a sense of purpose, of shared meaning, and of ownership (1991:321), and hence is a critical determinant of performance and the results of the latter. She further identifies and elaborates upon the managerial model; what she calls the cultural control model, and three alternative organisational cultural models or approaches that respond variously to the deficiencies of the managerial approaches. The additional identified approaches are the *subcultural model*, the *professional managerial multicultural* approaches, and the *public interest or public service* approaches. These will be reviewed in turn.

3.8.1.1 Cultural control (or managerial approach)

The cultural control approaches or managerial approaches of organisational culture (see Sinclair 1989:382-397) assumes that the ideal organisational culture is developed and controlled by management, is unique to the organisation, and is universally and passionately espoused within the organisation. Such an organisational culture is consistent across and entrenched within all the sub-systems

of the organisation. The ideal organisational culture as controlled by management is created by developing a corporate philosophy expressed in a mission statement that is widely propagated, publicised and championed by particularly the management echelons. The values pursued with the managerial approach to organisational culture are reinforced through, among other aspects, the design of physical structures and space, rituals and ceremonies, supporting recruitment and reward systems (*cf.* Sinclair 1989: 382-391; 1991:324-325; Fox & Miller 1995:3-8; Wilson 1993:43-50).

3.8.1.1.1 Critique

One of the main points of criticism of the managerial approach to organisational culture is that it is manipulative and disrespectful of the rights and needs of parties involved in the organisation that are not part of the managerial or leadership echelon. It follows a completely top-down approach, and is rigid in the fostering of its own belief systems, disregarding other potential influences that may be derived from internal forces (sub-cultures) and external environments (*cf.* Sinclair 1989:382-391; 1991:324-325; Fox & Miller 1995:4). Adler (1983: 495) confirms that the cultural control model's approach of ignoring or attempting to minimise cultural differences often causes resistance and disenfranchisement, which leads the organisation to operate at less than optimal effectiveness and efficiency. This approach to organisational culture is reminiscent of Weber's bureaucratic model (*cf.* Evan 1993:3-5).

As it operates ostensibly oblivious of external environments, it displays a disregard for local, national and international realities, that is, it endeavours to operate in apparent contempt of the environments in which it functions. An example that manifests traits of the cultural control approach is the South African public service that functioned in pursuance of apartheid goals, with the values of exclusivity that these goals espoused and entrenched.

3.8.1.2

Sub-cultural (professionalisation) approach

The sub-cultural approach argues that organisations are more likely to be the abode of a number of sub-cultures rather than one unitary and cohesive organisational culture. This is particularly probable when professionalisation and specialisation proliferate (Sinclair 1991:325). In order to distinguish between what has already been defined as "sub-culture" in this text (see 3.2 *supra*), this approach will subsequently be referred to as the "professionalisation" approach, a more descriptive title, as professional sub-cultures may be conceptualised as groups whose members and values transcend organisational boundaries (Sinclair 1991:325). Such individuals may form part of the public sector organisation, and may espouse the value system of the said organisation, but may display a deeper support of, and identification with their professional or occupational groups. Medical doctors, for example, while working in public sector organisations, and while endorsing the maternal holding culture, may identify more closely with the value system of their profession if the two value systems conflict. The controversial decision of Dr Serfontein to continue with heart transplant operations, and ostensibly uphold the Hippocratic oath, while in direct and obvious contravention of specific orders of the Gauteng Department of Health orders serves as a case in point.

The predominance of professional and other work values over organisational culture values may be ascribed to, and explained by the fact that the values and norms that people embrace with reference to their work are primarily informed by, and a result of their national, ethnic, religious and occupational socialisation, and is embedded in an individuals psyche throughout his or her natural life. Organisational culture, on the other hand, is learned through socialisation in the work place, which takes place from adulthood, that is, after professional and social culture is already embedded (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Saunders 1990: 290; Sinclair 1991:325). It stands to reason, then, that when organisational culture conflicts with professional, social or national culture, organisational culture is likely not to be supported. The resistance that some public officials manifest in the face of transformation and culture change since the establishment of the new regime (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.2 (a), (b)) seems to substantiate this. During the transformation of the Polish public sector Wiatr

(1996: 144-154) found that "... as a whole the old cadres are neither willing nor able to reinforce the process of transformation nor to acknowledge (the) administrative values" of the new government, as these were in conflict with the culture that they had espoused under the old government

Proponents of the sub-cultural approach maintain that it is imperative to recognise the existence of a diversity of value-systems espoused by the various professional and social culture representatives in the organisational setting, as well as the conflicts that may result from and because of these differences (*cf.* 3.2, 3.5, and 3.6 *supra*). For cultural management to be successful it is necessary to establish a fundamental core of overarching values, viz., a maternal holding culture, and strive to establish support for and cohesion around these core values while also acknowledging diversity in the beliefs of the professional and social cultures, and learn to manage same; *i.e.*, pursuing consistency between logics of action and interpretive schemes.

3.8.1.3 Professional-managerial multicultural approach

The professional-managerial multicultural approach recognises that public sector organisations will invariably include sub-cultures of policy, service, professional, management and other groups, and will therefore strive to maximise the contribution of all sub-cultures to the goals of the organisation. The goal is to strive after optimum synergism of the various groups and represented value-systems. It assumes reciprocal management (bottom-up and top-down approach) among the various groupings, as well as an attempt towards increased innovation. Proponents of this approach, such as Adler (1983:494-496) and Feldman (1976: 19-23) suggest that such synergy and innovation may be achieved through:

i. Appreciation for differences and similarities of value systems

Developing comprehension of, and empathy for, differences in value-systems as well as common ground. Recognising the extant differences as well as commonalities equips all the role players to endeavour to address and

capitalise on same, and to approach the search for solutions for responding to public sector organisational goals innovatively.

ii. **Developing a common culture**

Following the identification of the existing values, areas of common commitment can be identified (Adler 1983: 494; 496). These may include the embracing of particular goals such as commitment to citizen participation, transparency, fast, efficient, and effective service delivery, and other values and goals of democratic government. After core values have been identified and agreed upon, trade-offs should be made with regards to issues such as techniques of supervision, conflict resolution, and work procedures (see 3.5 & 3.6 *supra*).

iii. **Development of structures and systems**

It is imperative that structures of authority and division of labour, among other organisational issues (see 2.8.1 *supra*), be congruous with the values characteristic of the new organisational culture. A case of structure following function.

3.8.1.4 Public interest or public service culture approach

The public interest or public service approach to organisational culture recognises that public sector organisations are different from private sector organisations, and therefore must have different organisational cultures (*cf.* Harrow & Willcocks 1992: 50-52; Denhardt 1993: 72, 73, 79). This, however, does not mean that this approach espouses the belief in a monolithic public service culture. In addition the distinctiveness of public sector organisational culture must also not only be seen in contrast to private sector cultures, but also in comparison to other public sector organisations or departments. As pointed out at 3.2 *supra*, while public service departments are likely to espouse a particular maternal holding culture, they invariably form sub-cultures of the latter; disclosing organisational cultures that might be different, yet supporting the maternal holding culture (*cf.* 3.5.1 *supra*). Hence,

public sector organisations must develop their own distinctive cultures, and this must be done from the top down as well as from the bottom up; that is, taking into account that management should not be the only parties in determining what the organisational culture of public sector organisations ought to be, and the ultimate determining factor must be the needs of society (South Africa 1994: 1.3.3). Each public service organisation or department must respond to the distinctive challenges facing it, and its response must be within the framework of the prevailing political determinants, assuming that the latter confers legitimacy upon the organisational culture.

The culture building technique advanced by this approach is not only management driven, but includes other stakeholders as well. The *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a: 1.5) determines that the transformation process, and hence the change of the organisational culture of the public service will be subjected to an effective consultation process with the public service internally, and also externally with South African society. Those responsible for driving the transformation process comprise a number of parties under the supervision of the Department for the Public Service and Administration (South Africa 1995a: 6.1, see 4.5.1.3 *infra*).

3.8.2 Synthesis

For purposes of this thesis a synthesis of the above approaches is suggested. The organisational culture approach that should be emphasised at any point in the life cycle of the organisation should be a function of the stage of growth of the new public service in general, and departments in particular. The following steps are envisioned as the proposed approach:

- i. At the inception or birth stage of an organisation it may be necessary to, for a brief period, adopt a "benevolent dictatorship" approach, following the cultural control approach, in order to, amongst other goals, provide guidance, to foster and embrace a new maternal holding culture, to model the direction and

acceptance of new value systems, and to unearth and expunge old inconsistent maternal holding cultures; including the concomitant interpretive schemes and logics of action. This is particularly necessary if a new organisational culture has, for various ideological reasons to replace or transform a preceding culture that was strongly supported.

- ii. After a brief period, as the organisation ages and the new values, artefacts and assumptions become established and rooted in the realm of basic assumptions (see 2.8.3 *supra*), another and supporting approach, for example the public interest or public service approach, may receive more emphasis.
- iii. While the application of the cultural control approach is underway, however, there should be a simultaneous, conscious steering towards the goals of the public service approach *ab initio*. This calls for an awareness, and circumspect application of, the different approaches to organisational culture.

In the process of adopting or emphasising a particular approach, it must always be remembered to take cognisance of the existence of sub-cultures and organisation climates where individual cultures and climates are given credence and allowed expression within the framework of the adopted maternal holding culture; including the concomitant interpretive schemes and logics of action.

It therefore is always necessary for the organisational cultural drivers to guard against the indiscriminate embrace of any single approach throughout time. Hence any transformation process constitutes many factors, including the age, or stage of development, of the organisation, the political situation, the participation of civil society, and the level of competence and training of the public officials, that will determine or influence which approach to organisational culture is adopted and put into practice at any given time.

The Singaporean example of reform (see Quah 1996: 294-312) evinces an approach similar to the one proposed here. The case is related here at some length. A careful reading of the Singaporean transformation process indicates that an initial cultural control approach was applied. Specific policy goals were articulated and enforced

with the aim of attitudinal reform among particularly public officials who served the previous government, one that was diametrically opposed to the new government from an ideological point of view. Since government recognised that it needed the support and experience of the civil servants from the old regime, the attitude reform was designed to break the "... isolationist and anachronistic outlook" of the civil servants. Salaries were frozen, and variable allowances were reduced primarily to demonstrate that a new political leadership was in charge: Public officials were persuaded to participate in mass civic projects in order to inculcate a respect for the citizenry and to improve personal relationships among officials and politicians. Recruitment drives and affirmative action programmes, disciplinary measures, and selective retention were applied, all in order to achieve predetermined transformation goals. The efforts to turn the public officials more towards an awareness of the needs of the citizenry through participation in mass civic projects indicate an application of, or moves toward the public interest approach. The emphasis on training, and of bringing professionalism and pride to a public service that was previously dismissed as colonial and self-serving indicates efforts towards aspirations of the professional-managerial multicultural approach. While many public officials from the previous order resigned, primarily due to the selective retention policies, and due to the de-emphasising of seniority for promotion, as well as the increased disciplinary measures, the transformation was almost entirely complete after fifteen years, having achieved most of the set articulated goals.

While the above case study seems to support the adoption of a synthesis of the culture approaches treated above, it is important to heed the caution of Sayre (1967:354) who states:

"The nature of a particular bureaucracy is linked to the system of government and the society in which it operates ... Bureaucratic models are not packages ready for export or import; they provide illustrations of options and styles for consideration in their separate parts, and for adaptation before acceptance in a different country".

3.9 Summary and conclusion

This chapter concludes the theoretical consideration of organisational culture and its related constructs. Based on the approach to organisational culture as maternal holding culture, consideration was given to sub-cultures that exists in each organisation, and it was pointed out that in multi-departmental organisations, such as is the South African public service, each department will also form its own maternal holding culture, even though it stands as a sub-culture in relation to the umbrella maternal holding culture with regards to the core value systems of the organisation. In an effort to achieve the pursuit of a common public service vision, it is important for the transformation drivers, the *DP*SA in particular, to be aware of the sub-culture phenomenon since it has been mandated to coordinate the transformation process on behalf of the Cabinet. An understanding of the relationship between the maternal holding culture and sub-cultures will equip transformation drivers to take cognisance of peculiarities of sub-cultures, and of fostering the development of these, while addressing the need for the adoption of core values for the purpose collective action.

The Department of Public Service and Administration, as main driver of the transformation process, and whose main task it is to develop policy based upon the ideologies and values of the new government, will also need to understand the multi-faceted nature of organisational culture, taking into account the related constructs and accompanying phenomena as treated in this chapter. The role of knowledgeable and informed management in the culture change process will need to be understood and emphasised, since organisational culture change is likely to take place in an ineffective and inefficient fashion during the general transformation process if not managed properly; based on the awareness and knowledge of the transformation leader or culture carrier.

Focussing on the need for informed management with a view to achieve the latter, and In an effort to dispel uncertainty and confusion with regards to organisational climate, the latter construct was also treated in relation to organisational culture, pointing out the differences and similarities between the two constructs. Attention was then given to logics of action and interpretive schemes as they relate to

organisational culture, and it was concluded that the former two constructs may be regarded as two important facets of the multi-faceted organisational culture construct, facilitating improved comprehension and articulation of the organisational culture construct.

The chapter concludes with the review of four models of, or approaches to, organisational culture; viz. the cultural control approach, the sub-cultural approach, the professional-managerial multi-culture approach, and the public interest or public service approach. Against the latter consideration, the endorsement of a synthesis approach taking into account the fledgling status and the yet early development of the culture of the new South African public service is suggested. In order to manage organisational culture transformation, it is important for the *DPSA* to understand the different approaches to public service organisational culture, and to adopt and apply an approach that is relevant given the South African public service context and the values and ideals that the transformation drivers hope to achieve through the transformation process.

The ensuing chapter will focus on understanding transformation, particularly how it is understood and applied within the South African context. On the basis of chapters two and three the next chapter will also allow for important conclusions to be drawn *vis-à-vis* the relationships between organisational culture and transformation. In its turn these conclusions will facilitate the investigation of the importance of organisational culture change for transformation.

CHAPTER FOUR: PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION – DEFINITION AND CONTEXTUALISATION.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Transformation is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. Callbeck (cited in Thomas 1996:5) asserts that "... change has become the defining fact of our time". Most developed, developing and underdeveloped countries have embarked on transformation, re-evaluating the role of the state, the public sector, and other institutions and organisations in civil society; giving credence to the now conventional wisdom that the world of the public manager is changing rapidly and in fundamental and unprecedented ways. (Hughs 1994: 1-22; Kaul & Collins 1995:199-206; Bekke, Perry & Toonen 1996; Crawford 1996:1-5; Shin & Mesch 1996: 291-298).

While governments and civil societies worldwide are immersed in the new and necessary orthodoxy of transformation, it is nevertheless true that the process has been characterised and motivated differently in the different countries where it has been, and is, taking place. This fact has been substantiated by, among others, reports by official government representatives from 26 countries who attended a conference during 1999 on *Transforming Governments in the 21st Century* at Harvard University (Transforming Governments...: Online). Among the countries that reported on their motivations for embarking on transformation or reform, including South Africa, much overlap, but also much divergence in their approaches to transformation is evident. Some consideration needs therefore be given to the uniqueness, both in definition and purpose, of transformation in South Africa. The latter is the primary intent of this chapter. Given this intent, a theoretical and practical approach is indicated. It will be necessary to attend to pertinent definitions and the specific application of these definitions within the South African context.

Due to the relatively "new" nature of transformation and related phenomena and processes within the South African context, it is important to peruse the legislation, policies, and regulatory frameworks analytically, and to consider the level of

application of same in order to gain an increased understanding of what transformation entails within this context.

Throughout this chapter it is endeavoured to trace the relationship between transformation and organisational culture; a relationship that will become even clearer when considering chapter five *infra*, which, among other things, deals with the historico-political value systems on which the establishment of organisational culture is premised.

Attention will first be turned to the motivating factors that drive transformation.

4.2 THE MOTIVATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

The primary motivation behind most reforms of public management particularly in developed countries was a set of concerns about the quality, effectiveness and accountability of government in general, and in particular the public service (Smith 1996:113, 114; Working Group on Public Sector Reform: Online, Lienert: 1998, Online; Wilson 1999: Online). These reforms were and are primarily in pursuit of transforming public sectors into effective implements of governments that, in response, were to initiate and implement better economic and social policies. Many reforms were and are also in pursuit of introducing private sector practices into the public sector with a view to improving efficiency in government (Public Sector Reform in Britain: Online; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Crawford 1996:21ff).

The reform initiatives in the different countries; developed, developing and underdeveloped alike, have, in addition, at their roots the responses to common global challenges such as political, social, economic, technological and environmental changes (*cf.* Kaul: Online).

Skweyiya (1996:214) asserts that the general motivators behind transformations has been premised upon at least three factors, namely:

- i. the growing impact of global markets and competition and increased financial mobility;
- ii. spiralling economic liberalisation and political democratisation; and
- iii. the worsening economic crises in particularly the developing world.

The accuracy of Skweyiya's assessment is substantiated by the motivation for public service transformation that derives from the *New Public Management* and *Reinventing Government* movements as evinced in developed countries in particular. For example, Keating (1998: Online) indicates that public management reforms in OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries have been characterised by "... major cultural shifts". Evidence (Keating 1998: Online) point to the two following drivers for reform in OECD countries:

- i. Economic and social development concerns: While economic growth in OECD countries was generally acceptable, unemployment figures remained high, with concomitant languishing standards of living.
- ii. A loss of confidence in government: Globalisation and its accompanying conscientisation to the degree of international economic and social changes imposed new strains on policy and policy-making.

The OECD *Ministerial symposium on the future of public services* (cited in Keating: Online) stated: "... member countries were reforming their public services because of concerns about economic performance, the changing needs and demands of citizens and institutions, and a decline in confidence in government".

Admittedly the reforms Keating refers to related more specifically to management practices in the countries assessed by him, viz., Finland, New Zealand and Australia, among others. The transformation within the South African context, however, while emphasising a transformation of management practices (*cf.* Mokgoro 1997:243; South Africa 1994: 1.4.4-1.4.7; Skweyiya 1996: Online; Skweyiya 1994: 5, 14, 15; Thornhill 1994:53-55; Vil-Nkomo 1995: 21) emphasises fundamental structural, value and ideological changes (see 5.5 *infra*).

Seen from the latter vantage point it is clear that the transformation initiatives within the South African context, while pursuing similar interests as stated above (see 4.5.1.2 *infra*), are also radically different, as it was primarily in response to the political winds of change that blew over the whole South African government and society. Hence, the type of change implicated by the transformation initiative and pursuits of the government of the new South Africa for the public sector amounts to discontinuous change, or radical transformation, rather than incremental change of the public sector and its mode of functioning (see 4.11.1 *infra*).

It is, therefore, not only changes for the sake of management efficiency and improvement in service delivery that is required, while including these, but primarily, and more importantly, transformation of the political and societal pursuits of the new government in response to the needs of all South Africans as articulated in the *RDP* (ANC 1994; South Africa 1994: 1.1, 1.2; Stevenson & Lancaster 1995:511-513), rather than the exclusive apartheid pursuits of the erstwhile Nationalist Party government. The reforms demanded by the South African situation, therefore, were and are more than mere incremental changes and tinkering with organisational structures, but rather profound, radical changes as defined elsewhere in this thesis (see 4.11.1 *infra*; *cf.* 4.5.1 *infra*). Essential to the success of these reforms within the South African context is the building of a public service that is responsive to the real needs of all the peoples of South Africa (Skweyiya 1995; *cf.* Ramaphosa 1996:18, 19). This requirement is well established in the *RDP* as well as the Interim Constitution (Act 108 of 1993: sec. 212(2)(b) & Principle XXX) and the 1996 Constitution (Act 200 of 1996: s195).

The identified transformation trends invariably led to the questioning of existing state and public sector structures and institutions as well as institutions of civil society; giving rise to a distrust of orthodox centralised bureaucratic administration styles to more decentralised democratic management styles; a "... paradigm shift away from the 'administration mind-set' to one of 'management'" (Skweyiya 1996:214; *cf.* South Africa 1995a: 48-51). It further led to the redefining of the traditional relationships between government, public service and civil society, as well as a redefining of all the roles that each has to play.

The primary need for transformation in the South African public service, therefore, is premised upon the need for transformation in South African society in general, and upon the axiom that the public service is the government's most important instrument to normalise South African society (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:218; Koster 1993:2; *cf.* Marais cited in Mittner 1994:11). The need to normalise South African society is, as stated above, rooted in its apartheid past, which yielded a country characterised by huge imbalances, tremendous inconsistencies, and stark disparities evinced in affluence and luxury on the one hand, and poverty and deprivation on the other.

4.3 UNIQUENESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION

While there are many commonalities between the transformations taking place in the South African government and public sector and transformations elsewhere, it should be pointed out that there is one characteristic that stands out as far as the South African transformation is concerned; *i.e.*, the fact that it is an effort to transform the government and the public service from apartheid to democracy and inclusiveness. In this sense it is radically different in value pursuits. In this regard Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo (1995:217) state: "... our situation is special in the sense that we are required to change the actual nature of the South African state" (*cf.* Cloete, Fox, Müller, Schwella, Uys & van Rooyen Online). At least two important unique features of the South African public sector transformation need to be pointed out.

- i. Whilst transformation in developed countries seem to emphasise managerialism (Hood 1996: 268-283; Denhardt 1993: 1-20; Keating: Online; Ingraham 1996: 253-261) the transformation of the South African public service is rooted in the political transformation that the whole South African society has been undergoing particularly since the early 1990's (Skweyiya 1998; Maphai 1994: 66-87; South Africa 1994; 1.2.1, 1.4; South Africa 1995a: 1.1, 2.1-2.10; *cf.* Transforming Governments...: Online).
- ii. The transformation process that is taking place in the South African public service is motivated and steered by the developmental needs of the country and the majority of its citizens. The developmental needs stem

from the fact that the underdeveloped state in which the majority of the South African citizenry find themselves was one orchestrated by the National Party government since 1948 (South Africa 1994; 1.2.1, 1.4; South Africa 1995a: 1.1, 2.1-2.10; *cf.* 5.2 and 5.4 *infra*). This system of government meant the enforced separation of peoples by virtue of ethnicity; accompanied by gross discrimination that manifested in job reservation and creation of exclusive group areas, among other aberrations (see 5.2 *infra*).

The above factors, while not the only unique features, are major, given the South African context. This in addition to the aspects mentioned at 4.2 *supra* requires a particular definition and approach to transformation in South Africa.

4.4 APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The fact that organisational culture is fundamentally a construct articulated, designed, and academically treated within private sector contexts (*cf.* Jreisat 1997: 182, 183), may erroneously lead to the conclusion that all techniques for its research, application and understanding employed in private sector settings can, without careful reflection and prior testing, be adopted for and adapted to public sector settings. The same arguments are often applied to the management of change and transformation in the public sector as well. The seductive nature of the latter reasoning is obvious as it misleads the public sector manager to uncritically adopt techniques that are purportedly tried and tested in the private sector, but may have no analogous precedents in the public sector.

In consideration of the foregoing a realistic approach to transformation in the public sector as apposed to it in the private sector has to be articulated. Thomas (1996:6) provides such a pragmatic perspective. This may be summarised as follows:

- i. It is necessary to acknowledge that the transformation that transpires in the public sector is more about politics than about management *per se.* (*cf.* Skweyiya 1998; Latouche 1983: 262, 263). While political activities cannot be

completely separated from management activities, it should be emphasised that management approaches should not be mistaken as solutions for what are often political problems. In this regard Swilling and Wooldridge (1997:12) point out that:

"(A) strategy for managing administrative transformation must be rooted in and enhance the process of political transformation. If we allow the process of administrative transformation to become depoliticised, that is, to become a technical process of redeploying resources in new structures, we will find ourselves left with a new public service that, while having the merit of being non-racial, will remain incapable of impacting on social, economic and physical development".

The need for a political approach to transformation in the South African context has been reiterated by Mr Mandela when he, in his capacity as President, stated at the opening of Parliament in 1997 that while crime and the South African economy are receiving attention, it is more important to provide water, housing and education to the previously disadvantaged (Mandela 1997: Online; cf. Mandela 1999: Online). While there seems to be economic inconsistencies in Mr Mandela's approach, it clearly points out that the transformation of the South African society, government and public service is primarily driven by political values of equality and ridding South Africa of apartheid discrepancies. This attitude is in harmony with the RDP (South Africa 1995: 0.2, 0.3; 1.1; 1.2.1, 1.2.7) as adopted by the Government of National Unity (GNU); a clearly political mandate that demands an emphasis less on economic and managerial matters than on matters of politics and development.

- ii. Many of the popular models of organisational transformation and change derive from experience of samples of private sector organisations that are not susceptible to the complications peculiar to public sector organisations; of which size and motivation are just two examples. Consider for example the transformation, re-incorporation and amalgamation of the eleven apartheid public services into a unified South African public service (South Africa

1997:5; 4.5.2 *Infra*) as opposed to restructuring of private sector organisations.

- iii. The mistaken belief, reminiscent of the scientific management approach, viz. that there exists one best way to manage in the public sector is prone to rearing its head when transformation is considered (Wooldridge & Cranko 1995:334; *cf.* 2.2.1.3 *supra*).
- iv. Public sector transformation, as is transformation in any organisation, is inherently uncertain, precarious, and fundamentally confrontational, invariably creating conflict. Expectations of smoothly running transformations are uninformed at best. The potential for conflict during transformation is exacerbated by the sheer magnitude of the South African public sector transformation (see chapter 6 *infra*).

The inference of the above, therefore, is that there can be no legitimate grand theories of organisational transformation and change, and that the management of transformational change is particularistic (Crawford 1996:14). While general principles, approaches, and models are helpful in aiding the understanding and process of organisational transformation, practical wisdom and insight can only be acquired after examination of the traditions, conditions and needs of the particular organisation undergoing transformation (Thomas 1996:6). The need for this general statement derives from the lack of reliable empirical knowledge at this stage of the advancement of the theory of organisational culture transformation. The uniqueness and unprecedented nature of the South African public service transformation worsens this situation of uncertainty and conjecture. While important lessons may be learned from public sector transformation efforts in other countries; developed, underdeveloped, and developing, it is clear that the rationalisation of eleven disparate public services into one, such as is the case in South Africa, is unprecedented anywhere else in the world. So too are the basic tenets of apartheid on which government and public service policies were based. This obviously calls for unique definitions of, and approaches to, transformation and reform while gleaning from the successes and failures in reform initiatives of other countries. This is the approach in this thesis.

4.5 DEFINING TRANSFORMATION AND RELATED PHENOMENA - A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

While the transformation lexicon is wide and constantly developing, the meaning of the phenomenon and the phenomena related thereto, as well as their related implications, become clearer as comprehension of the context within which it is emerges. Even though the central issue in transformation remains change, many South African authors, commentators, academics and public officials use varied albeit related terms to, and synonymously with, transformation (*cf.* Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995; Thornhill 1994; Hilliard 1996; Hilliard & Wissink 1996; Cloete 1995:193-198). Some of these are, for example *transition*, *reform*, *restructuring*, and *reorganising*. A perusal of the literature indicates that a related concept, viz. *rationalisation*, enjoys more consensus usage, and is applied much more circumspectly. In an effort to avoid terminological ambiguity, as well as to take into account the context in which the above terms are used, viz. the transformation of the South African public service, it is important that the construct "transformation" be defined and explained clearly within the South African purview. This purpose may best be served by taking recourse to legislation and policies designed to substantiate and drive the process of transformation and the other activities inextricably related thereto. However, because of the symbiotic relationships between the phenomena, it is important to take heed to the caution that it would be a mistake to draw too rigid a distinction between the phenomena here treated (Turok 1996:110, 111), as the pursuit of the intellectually academic purpose could very well give rise to a misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the complexity of reality.

4.5.1 Transformation

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995a) does not specifically furnish an official definition of transformation, but does, by implication, use the construct synonymously with change. It states that the role of the new South African public service is to drive the processes of reconciliation, reconstruction and development in South Africa (South Africa 1995a: 1.1; *cf.* South Africa 1994: 1.14.14; 5.2.1; Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995: 218; Koster 1993: 2). The latter task necessitates the transformation of the public service into a coherent, representative,

competent and democratic instrument that will implement government policies and meet the needs of all South Africans (South Africa 1995a:1.1). In light of this need for transformation, the phenomenon can be explained as:

"... a dynamic, focused and relatively short term process, designed to fundamentally reshape the public service for its appointed role in the new dispensation in South Africa" (South Africa 1995a:1.2).

It is significant that the transformation process is specifically linked to a time frame (South Africa 1995a: 1.2). As a matter of fact this time frame, according to the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (1995:1.2), is what distinguishes transformation from other related constructs. It points out, for example, that while transformation and reform can and does transpire simultaneously, transformation is the predominating process, and of shorter duration, as opposed to reform, which is a "... broader, longer-term and on-going process". Thornhill (1994: 52) sees reform as referring to "... the process or procedure of becoming better by removing or abandoning imperfections, faults or errors." Relating this definition to the transformation of the South African public service, it would imply that "... particular attention be devoted to policy making processes, organisational structures, personnel matters, as well as managerial issues" (Thornhill 1994:52). Like the Commission for Administration (1993: 11), Thornhill is also convinced that, in addition to policy making process, organisational structure matters, human resource matters, and the like, it is of the utmost importance to enable and facilitate attitudinal changes toward the new government, as well as the accompanying administrative and managerial matters, since "... attitudinal change which really lies at the root of reform is ... the most difficult to achieve" (1994: 52, cf. Bellos 1994: 178-202). The closeness of the two definitions treated here is obvious, emphasising the integratedness of the reform and the transformation processes (see 4.6 and figure 4.1 *infra*).

Skweyiya (1998: Online) asserts that the historical basis for the existence of an organisation needs to be changed for that organisation to transform successfully if at all. This is certainly the case within the pre-1994 South African context where no real transformation transpired within the South African government in general and the public sector in particular during the so-called period of reform, since the NP

government tenaciously held onto the historical basis for the existence of the public sector, viz., promoter of the political aspirations of the government of the day as manifested in the apartheid policies (see 5.2.1; 5.6 *infra*). He also points out that, in addition to the historical basis of the organisation, it is also imperative that the "... design logic and ... structure needs to be changed". Here Skweyiya indicates an awareness among the South African drivers of transformation of the public service that it is not enough to simply change the structure or design of the public service, but also the historical value systems on which it was based (see 5.5 & 5.6. *infra*). Transformation, then, is not merely about changing structures and the hierarchical matters it entails.

4.5.1.1 Tenets of transformation

Skweyiya (1998: Online) and Bekke (Online) propose the following tenets of transformation within the South African context.

- i. *Transformation is a process of disintegration and re-integration.*

During transformation, it is necessary to assess and interrogate all extant structures, such as hierarchies of authority, accountability channels, and reward systems. Following this interrogation existing systems, procedures, and values, among other things, that are in opposition of the new direction indicated by the transformation will of necessity have to be changed or replaced, whereas valid ones need to be maintained, harmonised and incorporated into the new values.

- ii. *Transformation comprises rapid and radical change to all facets of an organisation.*

The result of the transformation process is an entirely new organisation. In light of the latter, Skweyiya asserts that "(T)ransformation is thus a process of *becoming* that re-organises organisational knowledge and operations, (creating) new relationships between an organisation and its environment, (altering) both the organisation and its environment".

The time element ascribed to transformation here seems contrary to the time ascribed to transformation in transformation literature, namely a long period of time. It is, however, in keeping with the understanding of the White Paper, viz., a relatively short period of time, with the longer period ascribed to reform.

iii. *Transformation is a process of invention.*

Transformation requires new ways of thinking and new ways of expression since it exceeds and challenges the confines of the known. In light of the latter transformation must be seen as "... a non-linear result whose detailed causal factors cannot be traced after the fact" (Skweyiya 1998: Online).

iv. *Transformation is a process of continued learning and development.*

During the transformation period it can be expected that all involved, particularly those tasked with driving the process, will discover and learn what works and what does not. Not being aware of this fact may result in missed opportunities and not recognising threats should they arise.

v. *Transformation is predicated upon continued dialogue.*

Successful transformation efforts are a function of how widely the processes are being supported by those who are affected by it. Since the natural response to change is to resist it due to the threat it poses to the *status quo*, continued consultation, information dissemination, and authentic dialogue is likely to benefit the process.

vi. *Transformation can be seen as the result of the "... intermeshing of three systems, viz., the individual, the institutional, and the collection of institutions that comprise the environment.*

The purpose of a sustained reform process in South Africa is to ensure that the South African public service, in an effort to respond effectively and efficiently to the

needs of the publics it serves, remains in step with the changing needs and requirements of the domestic and international environments (South Africa 1995a:1.2).

4.5.1.2 Transformation priorities

The Minister of Public Service and Administration, the main political change agent for public sector transformation and reform (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1), identified the following nine priority areas for public service reform for the South African public service (Transforming Governments ...: Online):

- i. Rationalisation and restructuring.
- ii. Institution building and management.
- iii. Representativeness and affirmative action.
- iv. Transforming public service delivery to meet basic needs.
- v. Democratisation of the state.
- vi. Human resource development and management.
- vii. Promotion of a professional service ethos.
- viii. Improving employment conditions and labour relations.
- ix. Information management and technology.

The latter list of priorities coincides with the list of transformation priorities as articulated in the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a: 5.1) and ostensibly derived from the *RDP* pursuits and the 1993 Constitutional principles (see 6.8 & 6.81 *infra*). The Minister indicated that all transformation and reform initiatives are directly linked to the afore-mentioned priority areas. If this is the case, and if organisational culture is a *sine qua non* of transformation (see 4.10 *infra*), then it follows that the transformation priorities identified for public service transformation in the South African context may fruitfully be explored in order to trace whether they have been used in order to affect organisational culture transformation. This exploration is undertaken in chapter six (6.4 *infra*).

The list of priorities further indicates that public sector reform and transformation within the in South African context will encompass the broader issues of governance, including the effectiveness of policy-making and implementation machinery, the provision and management of information, as well as information and communication technologies (ICT's), governmental relations, and the resulting implications for the interaction between the government and the heterogeneous community it is intended to serve (*cf.* Keating: Online). Public sector reform and transformation, then, have to address not only the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector, but also the way in which government policies, regulations and programmes contribute towards the improvement of the incentives and attitudinal changes of civil society in general. The South African socio-political context further demands that new ideological changes become rooted in the minds of every individual in the public sector with a view to transforming the public sector value systems, artifacts, and basic assumptions; in a phrase the public sector organisational culture (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(e), South Africa 1996: 197(1), (4); *cf.* 2.10 *supra*; 6.4 & 6.6 *infra*).

The list of transformation priorities also makes it clear that Min. Skweyiya as well as the Department of Public Service and Administration use the constructs "transformation", and "reform" interchangeably, but also see transformation as a subset of the total reform process. While organisational culture is not mentioned directly, the whole intent of the transformation priorities should be to address organisational culture change (see 4.10 *infra*). For example priority iii (representativeness and affirmative action) aims specifically to bring about a change in organisational culture of the public service when considered in light of the *Green Paper on a Conceptual Framework for Affirmative Action and the Management of Diversity in the Public Service* (1997e:3.1) and the composition of the inherited and rationalised public service (see 6.4.1.3 *infra*). The latter need for a value change is predicated upon the imperative of broad representativeness emphasised in the *South African Constitutions* (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b); South Africa 1996: 195(1)(i)). It is apparent that a transformation that will bring about a change in the composition of the public sector employee profile is likely to bring about a change in the organisational culture of the public service (*cf.* Adler 1983: 494-496; Viljoen 1992: 2; Müller & van der Walt 1998: 58, 59). These intentions are also evident in the *White*

Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997j:3.2.4, 3.2.5). Compare priorities *vi* to *viii* above in the latter regard (see 6.4 *infra*).

4.5.1.3 Responsibility for public service transformation in South Africa

The *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a:6.1) identifies several "policy instruments"; viz., "transformation structures and agencies, ..., (and) enabling legislation" (South Africa 1995a: 6.0), that were earmarked to drive and implement the transformation process. These are listed below:

- i. The Cabinet;
- ii. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on the Public Service and Administration and Public Accounts Committees;
- iii. Provincial Legislatures and Executive Councils;
- iv. The Ministry and Office for the Minister for the Public Service and Administration, (later restructured and renamed the *Department of Public Service and Administration* – see 6.3 *infra*).
- v. The Public Service Commission and Provincial Service Commissions;
- vi. The political and administrative heads of departments at national and provincial levels;
- vii. The Inter-governmental Forum;
- viii. The Ministry of Finance and Department of State Expenditure;
- ix. The Office of the Public Protector;
- x. The Office of the Auditor-General
- xi. Other Statutory Bodies such as the Gender and Human Rights Commissions;
- xii. The South African Management and Development Institute (SAMDI).

The key role-players, however, were to be the Ministry and Department for Public Service and Administration, the now defunct Service Commissions, Directors-General, Statutory Agencies, and the Public Service and Administration Portfolio Committee, with the Ministry and Department for the Public Service and

Administration taking the "... principle responsibility for overseeing, driving and co-ordinating" the transformation process (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1).

It should be noted that the Provincial Service Commissions have since been abolished. Statutory agencies such as the Public Protector, the Auditor-General, the Gender Commission, and the Human Rights Commission, are indicated as being involved in public service transformation primarily in monitoring, consultative and advisory capacities (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.4). They, along with other bodies such as the Public Service and Administration Portfolio Committee, will serve the transformation process in the capacity of monitoring the process, ensuring accountability in terms of performance of the public service, ensuring accountability, inclusion of human rights matters, providing forums for discussion and debate, among other salient transformation aspects (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.4; Teichman 2000: Interview).

This thesis, however, focuses primarily on the role that the Ministry and the Department for Public Service and Administration play in the transformation of the public service.

4.5.2 Rationalisation

The definition of transformation needs to be further expanded and conceptualised by defining another related construct, viz., *rationalisation*. The need for such a definition is predicated upon by the fact that, within the South African public sector context, rationalisation served as an essential precursor and prerequisite for effective public service transformation (South Africa 1995a:1). The reason for the chronological precedence of rationalisation stems from the need, peculiar to the South African transformation process, to amalgamate the eleven apartheid public services into one representative public service as required by the *Interim Constitution* (1993: 212(2)(c); Schedule 4, Principle XXX). The South African context determines that rationalisation be defined as:

"... the process of moving from a fragmented and dysfunctional system of administration to one which constitutes a balanced, integrated unity in which

every component is essential for the proper functioning of the whole" (South Africa 1996:1).

The goal of rationalisation, according to Dr Zola Skweyiya, the erstwhile Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration, is to rid South Africa and the South African government of a "... large unwieldy, ineffective, inefficient and costly public service" (Levitz 1995:6). In this sense, rationalisation can be regarded as the process of streamlining the size and productivity of staff in an effort to yield human resource costs commensurate with the value of the output of the organisation (Swilling & Wooldridge 1997:11).

Ncholo (1996:223), however, prefers to regard the process of creating a leaner, more efficient and more cost-effective public service as "right-sizing". He subscribes to the definition of *right sizing* as being:

"... a concerted effort to determine, on a programme by programme basis as reflected in the budget, the minimum number of staff which would be adequate to deliver a particular programme, having regard to declared government policy and priorities, appropriate service delivery levels, the budgetary ceiling set by Cabinet, and the Cabinet directive concerning the right-sizing of the Public Service" (Ncholo 1996:226).

It is clear that the rationalisation and right sizing processes are linked so closely that they can only be separated theoretically. In common usage and in government documentation the concepts are, however, used interchangeably. It will be thus used in this thesis.

4.5.2.1 Purpose of rationalisation

The *Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 200 of 1993) envisaged a single, unified, representative public service that serves all the members of the South African community in an unbiased and impartial manner (South Africa 1993: sect. 212(2)(b), (c); cf. South Africa 1994: 5.1, 5.2.1, 5.4.1; Levitz 1995: 4). This quest should be seen in light of the fact that the reality during the apartheid era was

that there existed eleven disparate and fragmented public services, each with its own constitution, legislative-, executive-, and judicial structures, systems and organisational cultures (South Africa 1994b: 6; cf. 5.2.1; 5.2.2). The purpose of the plurality of public services was to establish and sustain viability for the National Party's policy of apartheid and the underlying value systems (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.1; 5.4; 5.6 *infra*). To give credence to the apartheid policies, public services and all matters pertaining to the functioning thereof were multiplied, exercising considerable strain on the South African economy, and resulting in inefficiencies and non-legitimacy in so far as the majority of South Africa's peoples were concerned (see 5.5 *infra*, South Africa 1995a: 3.1.1(a)-(c)).

The rationalisation process targeted public executive institutions at national and provincial levels of government with a view to establishing a unified public service characterised by effective and efficient administration and management (South Africa 1997a:1). In terms of vastness and size the rationalisation process was faced with eleven public services that employed approximately 1,2 million public servants. The size of the eleven public services resulting from National Party apartheid politics (see 5.2.1 *infra*) at the end of September 1993 is reflected in table 4.1.

4.5.2.2 Responsibility for rationalisation

The *Interim Constitution* determines that the responsibility for the rationalisation of the public service shall primarily but not exclusively rest with the National Government in cooperation with the Provincial Governments, and the now defunct Provincial Commissions with due regard to the advice of the Public Service Commission in its pre-transformed state (South Africa 1993: 237(2)(a)(i)). The latter section states:

"The responsibility for the rationalisation ... shall primarily but not exclusively rest with the national government, which shall exercise such responsibility in co-operation with the provincial governments and the Commission on Provincial Government, and with due regard to the advice of the Public Service Commission ..."

Table 4.1: Approximate size of the fragmented South African Public Service as at September 1993 (Source: South Africa 1997: 5)

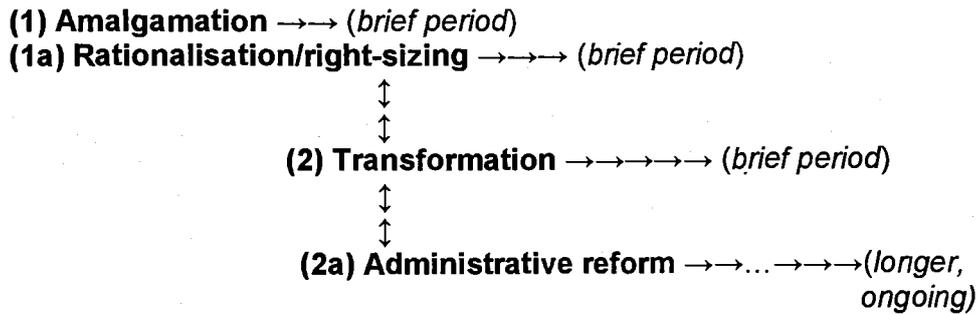
SIZE OF THE FRAGMENTED PUBLIC SERVICE UNDER APARTHEID		
South African Public Service		746 400
"Independent States":		
<input type="checkbox"/> Transkei	94 700	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bophuthatswana	65 000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Venda	30 500	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ciskei	30 600	
		220 800
"Self-governing" territories:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Gazankulu	35 100	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kangwane	15 300	
<input type="checkbox"/> KwaNdebele	12 500	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kwa Zulu	82 500	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lebowa	59 600	
<input type="checkbox"/> QwaQwa	15 400	
		220 400
Total		1 187 600

4.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMALGAMATION, RATIONALISATION, TRANSFORMATION AND REFORM

The processes of rationalisation, right sizing, transformation and reform may visually be depicted as indicated in figure 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 indicates that rationalisation of the South African public service had to be preceded by the amalgamation of the eleven separate public services (*cf* South Africa 1997f:1-9). The horizontal arrows in figure 4.1 indicate that the actual duration of the processes are different as they relate to the South African situation. The vertical arrows emphasise the integratedness of the processes.

Figure 4.1: Relationship between amalgamation, rationalisation, transformation and administrative reform



While an attempt has been made to define transformation, rationalisation and reform individually, the interwovenness of the phenomena cannot be overemphasised. If the present government remains committed to fundamental and radical change, then it needs to be clear of the fact that the three phenomena will of necessity flow into, and impact upon one another.

4.7 THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSFORMATION

The use and importance of language will invariably influence organisational culture, and hence will have an important impact on the transformation process. This is so, because, as Thomas (1996:7) points out, "... organizational reality is not just a function of certain objective facts and events, but also of our subjective perceptions and interpretations of those circumstances". The latter subjective perceptions and interpretations, of course, are articulated in language. Words convey images of the purpose and processes of organisations and institutions, and thereby help to condition how people think, behave, and understand realities (*cf.* Fox and Miller 1995:46-49, 120-128). Language, or more appropriately, rhetoric is hence not simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world, but commands a central position in the construction of social life (Gill 1996:141-156). In the latter sense it may be inferred that rhetoric in the communication of organisational transformation goals and ideals is an important factor in articulating new visions persuasively (see 4.9, *vi infra*). Thomas (1996: 5-29) indicates that while proponents of transformation

have recognised the importance of rhetoric as a form of persuasion, as well as for the symbolic value that it conveys (cf. Newhouse & Chapman 1996:996), sobriety needs to prevail lest rhetoric be confused for solid evidence and argumentation for and about transformation. In this regard Fox and Miller (1995:111-159), too, make a cogent appeal for authentic discourse in the public sphere.

In the above sense transformation rhetoric plays a major role in how public officials and South African society in general perceive and experience what takes place in the country. This rhetoric creates stereotypes regardless of its accuracy. Hence the concepts *transformation*, *restructuring* and other related ones discussed above invoke positive images and stereotypes, often, in spite of realities. This matter is worsened given the South African apartheid past, which gave result to the sense among the majority of the South African population that anything would be better than apartheid.

4.8 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST TRANSFORMATION

In light of the positive images that might be conjured up by transformation rhetoric it is necessary to also point out reasons why transformation might be resisted from some quarters.

- i. Change involves considerable risk to all who are involved or that may be influenced by it (Levin & Sanger 1994:172). Because of the threat that fundamental change may pose it is often strongly resisted (von Stackelberg: Online). The authors and compilers of the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Sector* identified a very real fear among public officials. Particularly White public officials were concerned for their future in the public service due to the planned rationalisation and affirmative action programmes (1995a: 3.1.2(a); cf. Koster 1993:2). The preponderance of fear had a deleterious effect on the morale in the public service and in some cases gave rise to resistance to the transformation (cf. 6.4.1.5; Kets De Vries & Balazs 1999: 661-663).

- ii. Fear of change was not the only factor that gave rise to resistance, but also ideological opposition to the new direction that government was taking with the public service and South African society (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.2(b)). Right-wing movements also expressed the fears of some Afrikaners *vis-à-vis* transformation in government and the South African society. Carel Boshof, leader of the Afrikaner Volkswag, for example, wrote: "Afrikaners are concerned about what is currently taking place in South Africa and about their future. Anxieties may be eased and their co-operation gained by providing a partitioned state" (Boshof 1991:25).
- iii. There are close ties between organisation strategy, mission statement, and organisation culture (Jabes and Zussmann 1989: 109, 110), and success in transformation rests on establishing harmony among the three issues. The importance of establishing the said harmony stems from the fact that it is difficult to impose a mission statement on, or strategic direction in an organisation when these run counter to the dominant culture. This in part explains the fear among many White public sector employees who experienced a threat to their positions due to the new value statement and strategic direction taken by the new public service (South Africa 1995a: 3.1.2(b); see 3.5 & 3.6 *supra*; 5.6 *infra*), which was antithetical to the dominant public sector culture they had been used to under apartheid.
- iv. In light of the latter it can be concluded that resistance to change often comes from parties who have vested interests in the maintenance of the *status quo*. This point is also addressed in chapter five (see 5.2.2.2) where it is indicated that certain positions of compromise had to be concluded during the Multi-Party Negotiations due to the reluctance of the National Party to lay all on the line in the event of a winner takes all type election.
- v. Organisational culture is difficult to change (see 3.4 *supra*). This is so because organisational culture is the product of a long history; having formed over a long period of time, and cannot simply be changed by command, pronouncement, or "... emotion-laden description of a new vision" (Levin & Sanger 1994: 176). It seems evident, therefore, that if culture results from a

long history, then transforming organisational culture will also necessitate protracted time and concerted effort; and will not be without real challenges (Levin & Sanger 1994:176; Wilkens & Patterson 1985:268-271; Schein 1985:17-43; Kotter 1995:59, 66, 67).

The latter aspects militate against any transformation process with a limited time agenda such as that envisaged by the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a:1.3)

4.9 THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

As this thesis is about transformation in the public sector, and as the primary hypothesis implies that public sector transformation is likely to be unsuccessful if it does not utilise the organisational culture perspective, it is necessary to define transformation within the context of the organisational culture perspective. It is also necessary to determine the relationship between the transformation and organisational culture by means of comparison and contrast. In an effort to achieve this two-pronged goal, some other related issues will also be identified and explored with a view to making clear their interrelatedness.

4.9.1 Transformational change

Rainey (1997:338) opines that transformation is simply a fashionable term for large-scale, comprehensive change efforts. In light of Rainey's opinion almost all transformation efforts can be said to have one specific goal in common, viz. "... to make fundamental changes in how business is conducted in order to help cope with a new, more challenging market environment" (Kotter 1995:59). The same fundamental goals would apply in a public sector environment.

Literature on large-scale organisational transformation efforts is quite diverse and onerous to recapitulate concisely. Kotter (1995), however, provides an overview of patterns of organisational change and transformation in which he furnishes valuable observations about analysing and managing successful change and transformation

interventions. His approach is to present a number of reasons for the failure of organisational transformation and change. An inversion of the reasons for failure will, however, reflect arguments for successful transformation interventions. While his findings are based on research of primarily small and large, successful and unsuccessful, profitable and unprofitable private sector companies and parastatals, insights can be gleaned that are likely to be applicable to transformation and change in the public sector.

Kotter's (1995:59-67) research indicates that organisations that underwent successful transformations demonstrate that the transformation process comprises a series of at least eight phases. These phases, in total, usually require a considerable length of time. He further identifies two imperatives for successful transformation, or "... large scale, comprehensive change efforts" (cf. Rainey 1997:338) viz.:

- i. that the transformation process attend to all eight phases, as an omission of any of the phases in pursuit of concluding the process as early as possible merely creates the illusion of speed without generating satisfying results; and
- ii. that critical errors in any of the phases can hold catastrophic implications for the transformation process, slowing it down and negating any progress.

The requirements for successful transformation that Kotter (1995:60-67) lists will be summarised and related to the South African transformation and reform processes. In this way a broad measure of the South African transformation and reform processes can be established.

4.9.1.1 Establishing a sense of urgency

Most successful change efforts in organisations have their origin in the questioning of the *status quo* by some individual or group. It is necessary that the extant situation be investigated in terms of the organisations' competitive situation, market position, relevance *vis-à-vis* the ambient environment, among other important con-

cerns. The focus of such an investigation would be to determine, for example, the measure in which the original organisational goals are still being met efficiently and effectively, whether goal achievement can be improved, and whether the original goals are still relevant given the dynamic ambient environment. The information gained from such investigations must then be communicated in dramatic fashion, particularly when it involves or implies crises, potential crises, or great and propitious opportunities. The urgency of the necessary transformation must be conveyed persuasively, preferably by credible and enthusiastic change agents. The crucialness of this dramatic communication is determined by the fact that aggressive cooperation of many motivated and convicted individuals and groups is required to get any transformation process underway, and to sustain it.

Any radical transformation process, by definition, requires the creation of a new system or systems. Such change is always threatening to individuals and groups as it faces them with the unknown, and, at the very least, threatens their comfort zones, which can give rise to undesirable and possibly vehement resistance.

It is important that the communication of the need for transformation also includes the possible results of not embarking on transformation as well as a careful scenario setting of both the positive and negative results should transformation be undertaken. The purpose of authentic communication by the change agent or agents is "... to make the status quo seem more dangerous than launching into the unknown" (Kotter 1995: 60).

The South African societal and public service context evinces an urgent and radical transformation process brought about by the untenable nature of apartheid and its subsequent demise due to pressures agitating for a democratic order in South African society and the public service (see 5.2 *infra*). Another factor is the worldwide call for a democratic world order; particularly since the razing of the Berlin Wall. The dramatic communication of the need for South African transformation emanated from various quarters nationally and internationally, but was notably articulated in the *RDP* (ANC 1994; South Africa 1994; chapter 5 *infra*) by contrasting the abuses of apartheid to the need for reconstruction and development of a majority of neglected South Africans.

4.9.1.2 Forming a powerful guiding coalition

While one or two individuals might initiate transformation efforts, successful transformation efforts indicate that a leadership coalition has to be established and made to grow over time (Kotter 1995:62). Such a coalition should be inspired by a shared commitment to the transformation process. They should also be characterised by their credibility, power and authority in terms of training, information, expertise, reputations and relationships. The guiding coalition should comprise senior management and also individuals outside of senior management. The need for external change agents arises from the fact that had the management corps of the organisation managed well and efficiently, there would not have been a need for transformation in the first place. Since the extant system is not functioning well, reform generally demands active participation of parties who are not part of the formal boundaries, expectations, and protocol. A powerful coalition also serves as a forceful catalyst to garner support, and to stifle the formation of opposition groups.

In the transformation of South African society, powerful change agents were established over time through the well-documented liberation struggle. These were formalised through intensive negotiation processes at CODESA and the Multi-Party Negotiations at Kempton Park, and ultimately legitimated through the democratic election processes that transpired during April 1994, followed by the establishment of a Government of National Unity (GNU). The mandate to drive the transformation of the public service with a view to transforming the South African society was passed on to the Minister of the Public Service and Administration and the *DPSA* (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1). The transformation process, however, must be executed in coalition with other statutory bodies and policy instruments (South Africa 1995a: 6.1-6.3; see 4.5.1.3 *supra*), although under the leadership of the President of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa 1994: 2.2.2).

4.9.1.3 Creating a vision

The aim of creating a vision is to provide a *raison d'être* for, and to direct, the transformation effort. The guiding coalition has to develop a vision of the future of

the organisation that is relatively easy to communicate, and that is comprehensible and appealing to customers, stockholders and employers. Without a sensible vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing and incompatible projects that can misdirect the organisation, or take it nowhere at all. In short the change leader or leading coalition should create a vision that is clear, sensible and inspiring. It should also be couched in a compelling statement of achievable goals, stipulating the strategies that will be followed in pursuit of the goals.

The creation of the vision for a transformed South African public service was articulated in the *RDP* (ANC 1994: chapter 5) and *the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 200 of 1993) as well as the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a). This transformation was based upon, and driven by the need for reconstruction and development of South African society. It is significant that the *RDP* served as the political manifesto of the African National Congress during the 1994 election period. In a televised debate between Mr Nelson Mandela and then President FW De Klerk in 1994, Mr Mandela challenged Mr De Klerk on the basis that the *RDP* clearly articulates the ideals that the ANC holds for a new South Africa whereas Mr De Klerk's National Party had no concisely articulated vision of the future South Africa to offer (*cf.* Williams 1991:11-15).

4.9.1.4 Communicating the vision

It is important to capture the support of all who will be involved in, or influenced by the transformation process. This implies that the vision needs to be communicated clearly and regularly to the parties that will be impacted upon by the transformation process. These parties will not provide the necessary, sometimes sacrificial, support unless they are convinced that the needed change is possible. Kotter (1995:63) asserts: "... without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured". Hence, every possible means of communication must be used, and that as often as possible, in order to disseminate information about the transformation process as widely as possible (see 4.7 *supra*).

More importantly, however, is the example of the change leaders in relation to the transformation goals (Schein 1985; Korac-Kakabadse & Korac-Kakabadse 1997:451-453; Denhardt 1993: 23-32). As Allen and Kraft (cited in Brown 1995: 141) opines: "... the very definition of successful leadership is the ability to bring about sustained culture change". Pindur and Reynolds (1995:695) state: "(t)op management should provide the climate for change, institute the process and procedures, and provide the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators necessary to change behaviour within the organisation". They should consciously attempt to become living representative symbols of the transformation goals, *i.e.* of the new organisational culture (see 4.10 *infra*). This implies that if the goal of transformation is to be more customer oriented, then the change leaders in particular must behave in more customer oriented ways. Nothing communicates more convincingly than the exhibited examples of the change leaders (Denhardt 1993:263; Quah, Asmeron & Reis 1996: 305, 306). Consequently, behaviour of important individuals that is inconsistent with the transformation goals that they promulgate is bound to undermine the transformation process as it communicates values contrary to the pursued transformation values.

Research by analysts of the US General Accounting Office (GAO) indicated that the two key techniques for successful culture change were that "... top management must be totally committed to the change in both words and actions", and that the organisation "must provide training that promotes and develops skills related to their desired values and beliefs" (Cooper, Brady, Hidalgo-Hardeman, Hyde, Naff, Ott & White 1998:257, 258).

The need for able, exemplary leadership in the process of the transformation of the South African public service has been recognised by government. This recognition is articulated in the *Draft White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995: 5.2), and further expanded in the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a: 6.1.1).

Evidence of leadership behaviour contrary to expressed transformation goals has, however, thwarted these goals and placed the spotlight on the authenticity, or lack thereof, of transformation rhetoric, particularly in relation to ethical conduct of leaders

in the public service and in government. Certain transformation leaders in the public service evidently used their positions for personal gain rather than for transforming the public service to benefit South African society. Former Commissioner of Prisons, Khulekani Sitole, brought disgrace upon himself and others through such abuse of office (Jurgens 2000:13), and lost the opportunity to provide the exemplary leadership necessary to drive public service transformation. The corruptive activities of which former Minister of Welfare and Population Development, Mr Abe Williams, was found guilty (Van Zilla 2000: 5) also served to bring into question the commitment of political and administrative leadership to transformation of the public service.

4.9.1.5 Empowering others to act on the vision

For the transformation process to be successful it is necessary to empower all that will be involved to achieve their particular goals and actions as dictated by the overall vision. The behavioural example of change leaders could serve as an empowering or dis-empowering factor for those whom they aim to influence. Mr Mandela, before, during, and after his presidency embodied the ideals of reconciliation, tolerance and other traits necessary for the successful transformation of South African society and public service. This was particularly visible in his impassioned pleas to Mr PW Botha when the latter refused to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC). Against the advice of many, and in the face of the chagrin of most Blacks, Mandela approved several millions of rand of legal fees for Botha, and offered to accompany him to the TRC hearings (*cf.* Tsedu 2000:15). While Mandela's pleas were not heeded by Mr Botha, this did not negate the fact that his conciliatory stance, in spite of past abuses suffered, served as example for others to emulate; both in society and in the public service. This trait has led Kathrada (1998: 3) to describe Mandela as "... the universally admired leader and statesman; the forgiver and reconciler; ...; the man who harbours no bitterness, no feelings of hate and no desire for retribution."

Empowerment requires that all obstacles, real or imagined, as far as possible, be removed. Examples of these possible obstructions are organisational structures

(maintenance of systems that are incompatible with the new vision), narrow job categories, inadequate compensation or performance-appraisal systems, and inconsistent behaviour of change leaders. These may threaten the well-being of employees, and may compel them to choose between self-preservation and the new vision that they may experience as being inconsistent with their ideals (Wessels & Viljoen 1992: 202).

At the basis of the latter lies the basic human fear of change (*cf.* Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 1996:484-486; Wessels & Viljoen 1992: 198-217; Wessels 1994: 193-202). While it may not be possible to remove all impediments to the change effort, it is essential that those that stand out clearly be removed summarily. If the hindrance is individuals in the organisation, it is important that they be treated consistent with the new vision, even if it means removal. The important fact is that action to support the transformation process is imperative, both to empower those involved in the process, and to maintain the credibility of the process as a whole.

It became clear to change agents in the South African transformation process that training, transformation of organisational structures through amalgamation, rationalisation, affirmative action, changing of job categories, among many other processes, would all be very important in order to empower those involved in the transformation of the public service to achieve the goals of a transformed South African society and public service (South Africa 1994: 5.6.1; South Africa 1995a: chapter 9).

4.9.1.6 Creating and celebrating short-term victories

An important factor of the transformation process is that it takes long to yield all of the expected and anticipated results. While setting time frames are important, too short a time period allocated to transformation is unrealistic precisely because of the fact that it takes a long time for transformation to yield expected and anticipated results. Transformation, however, is likely to lose momentum if there are no short-term goals to achieve and celebrate. The loss of momentum results from the loss of support from those who are affected by, and who participate in, the transformation

process if they become disillusioned for the lack of visible and compelling evidence that the process is producing expected results. The success of the change process over the short term therefore, must, be accompanied by constantly communicating short-term achievements to those involved in accomplishing them. Recognising the contribution of the public officials involved in the achievement of the transformation goals in the form of promotions, pecuniary, and other, rewards will also foster commitment to sustaining the process. The value that such rewarding and recognition holds of continued and successful transformation is duly recognised by the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper)*. It states that:

"It is also important that the efforts of staff – both individuals and groups – who perform well in providing customer service, should be recognised and appropriately rewarded. In considering the transformation of the existing awards systems in the Public Service, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) will give due regard to the need for recognising and rewarding such efforts" (South Africa 1997d: 5.1).

In apparent recognition of the need to achieve and celebrate short-term goals that will inspire the achievement of medium-term and long-term goals, then President Mandela stated in his 100-days state of the nation address on 18 August 1994 (cited in South Africa 1994: 2.5.1; cf. 2.5.3):

"(I)n line with the objectives of the RDP, we will, by the end of the year, require clear medium and long-term strategies from all departments and parastatal institutions on mechanisms of shifting their operations to meet the requirements of reconstruction and development. ... (W)e should ... not allow ... a sense of unguided drift at any level of Government ... We [must] ensure constant monitoring and timely interventions where necessary to reorientate all departments to the major national tasks at hand. This includes a system of regular reports from Ministries on the basis of guidelines dictated by reconstruction and development perspectives."

The annual budget speeches and annual reports of the various ministers delivered to Parliament during the period 1994 and 1999, the period of public service transformation considered by this thesis (see 1.4.2 *supra*) in a sense, are

celebrations of short term and other transformation achievements by the different departments in their charge. The Government's Report to the Nation (1998: Online) provides a summary of what the government regards as having been its successes and challenges over three-and-a-half years of governance. The report briefly articulates transformation successes such as aspects of nation building, successes in reconstruction and development such as increased provision of access to water and electricity, transformations in the education system by providing a single education system, and prioritising human resource development in government and the public service. Constantly communicating these successes to those public officials involved in the transformation process, and appropriately rewarding those responsible for these successes can contribute towards the achievement of further transformation successes.

4.9.1.7 Consolidating progress and generating additional change

While it is necessary to recognise and reward short-term victories, it is a grave error to declare victory too soon. Kotter (1995:66) states that "... until changes sink deeply into a company's (read: *organisation's*) culture, a process that can take five to ten years, new approaches are fragile and subject to regression". Declaring premature victories without using them as motivators to gain larger victories could cause the short term victories to dissipate, de-motivating the people involved in the process, and allowing the *status quo* to creep back in and continue. This has been one reason for the failure of reform initiatives in Africa during the 1980's, aside from the limited focus that characterised these reforms (Yahaya 1995: 15, 16).

Leaders of successful transformation efforts use the credibility afforded by short-term wins to address even bigger anomalies that require transformation; pursuing and changing systems, structures and values that are not consistent with the transformation vision. They progressively undertake and monitor new change projects that may be even bigger than the initial ones, assuring that successes are identified and celebrated within context of the bigger vision (see 4.9.1.6 *supra*). They take charge or pay close attention to the promotion, hiring, development, and

training of employees so that the latter processes are in support of the transformation process (see 6.4.1.3 & 6.4.1.6 *infra*; cf. 4.9.1.6 *supra*).

4.9.1.8 Institutionalising the new approach

The whole transformation process would not hold unless it becomes institutionalised, *i.e.*, unless it becomes embedded in the warp and woof of the organisational culture; in "... the way we do things around here". Kotter (1995:67) observes that unless new behaviours are rooted in social norms and shared values, (*i.e.*, embedded in the organisational culture) they are subject to decline as soon as the pressure for transformation disappears.

The transformation can be institutionalised in the organisational culture in at least two ways.

- i. Firstly, by clearly articulating the relationship between the new behaviours and organisational success; that is, conclusively demonstrating how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes are likely to contribute towards the achievement of the articulated and communicated goals.
- ii. Secondly, leadership development and succession must be ensured. This means that the current and the next generation of managers and leaders must personify the new approach, and positively champion it. In the absence of such succession the gains of transformation are likely to gradually disappear.

Kotter (1995:67) indicates that a clear, shared vision of the change process is imperative in reducing the error rate in a process that is fraught with potential errors. Other studies on large-scale change in organisations, such as Rainey (1997: 338, 339) and Allen & Allen (1990) emphasise the essential role of shared values, the basis of visions (cf. 5.6, 6.6, & 6.8 *infra*).

Events in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), where men and women with "... fundamental (*sic*) different military cultures" were integrated (Lekota 2000) serves as example, though extreme, of what might ensue in a transformation

process where there is evidently a lack of shared vision. The killing of six officers and one civilian, all white, by a black soldier at Tempe military base near Bloemfontein, has been ascribed to race as a central factor (Laurence 1999: Online). British military advisors have evidently warned that Tempe was "... a cauldron of racial animosity waiting to explode" (Laurence 1999: Online), which evinces a lack of shared vision as a result of the transformation process from a segregated defence force to an integrated one (Cock as cited in Laurence 1999: Online).

Given the South African context, one of the major threats of transformation of the public service could easily have been the change of leadership in the driving of the transformation process, since sustained transformation generally requires sustained leadership. During the period under consideration, the primary leadership remained the same in the persons of Dr Zola Skweyiya as Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration, and Dr Paseka Ncholo as the Director-General of said department. In 1999, however, the reigns were taken over by Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi as Minister and Mr Robinson Ramaite as Director-General. Ms Fraser-Moleketi introduced a "... new set of transformation priorities" (Fraser-Moleketi 1999), which differed somewhat from the list adopted in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service*. See table 4.2 below for a comparative list of priorities. Instead of replacing the priorities with a contrary list, however, the aim with the "... new set of transformation priorities" is primarily to continue to drive the public service transformation process forward. It also emphasises the need for sustaining the transformation process and to endeavour to "... consolidate the progress of the last five years while gearing ourselves for meeting challenges brought about by globalisation and the technological revolution." (South Africa 1999/2000: Online).

The steps for successful organisational transformation treated above, and applied to the current transformation in the South African public service, are summarised in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.2 Comparative lists of transformation priorities

Skwilyya's / <i>White Paper</i> ... priorities (1994-1999)	Fraser-Moleketi's priorities (1999-?)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rationalisation and restructuring. 2. Institution building and management. 3. Representativeness and affirmative action. 4. Transforming public service delivery to meet basic needs. 5. Democratisation of the state. 6. Human resource development and management. 7. Promotion of a professional service ethos. 8. Improving employment conditions and labour relations. 9. Information management and technology. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comprehensive review of the extant public service conditions of service, and the development of a new wage policy. 2. The improvement of the quality of information on the public service that is used in planning and decision-making. The improved quality information would be published on a quarterly basis. 3. The accelerated implementation of the new public service management framework, the skills audit and the <i>Batho Pele</i> programme. 4. The development of strategies with a view to decreasing personnel costs and containing personnel expenditure. 5. Development of policy and guidelines for alternative service delivery mechanisms. 6. Fast tracking capacity building programmes for all public servants. 7. The improvement of the information technology and information management systems in the public service. 8. The development of the capacity of the DPISA to investigate and advise on the efficiency of the public service in the short and medium term.

While the above steps for successful organisational transformation have primarily been gleaned from the experiences of private sector organisations, it was shown by way of example and application (see 4.9.1.1-4.9.1.8 *supra*) that similar processes were adopted and applied to the transformation processes in the public sector.

TABLE 4.3: Eight steps for successful organisational transformation
(Adapted from Kotter (1995:61) and Rainey (1997:339).

1.	Establishing a sense of urgency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining market and competitive realities • Identify and discuss crises and opportunities
2.	Forming a powerful guiding coalition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble a group with enough power, authority and credibility to lead the transformation effort. • Encourage the group to work as a team, pursuing the transformation goals.
3.	Create a vision or value system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a vision that directs the change effort. • Develop strategies for achieving the vision, <i>i.e.</i> for establishing the new value system.
4.	Communicating the vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use all available means and strategies to communicate the new vision and value systems repeatedly. • New behaviours should be taught by the example of the guiding coalition.
5.	Empowering others to act on the vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove, in so far as possible, obstacles to change. • Change systems and structures that undermine vision. • Encourage risk taking and thinking that questions the <i>status quo</i>.
6.	Creating and celebrating short-term victories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for visible performance improvement. • Create those improvements. • Recognise and reward individuals responsible for, and involved in, the improvements.
7.	Consolidating progress and generating additional change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use increased credibility to change aspects of the status quo that do not fit the new value system. • Employ, develop, and promote individuals who can realise the vision. • Rekindle the process with new projects, themes, and change agents.
8.	Institutionalising the new approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulate the relationships between the new behaviours and organisational success. • Ensure leadership development and succession.

4.9.2 COMPARING PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION TO CHANGE OF PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

In section 3.5.3 *supra* attention was focussed on the organisational culture change process. A comparison of the process treated there to the transformation process as

explained at section 4.9.1 above yields results that indicate a close relationship between organisational culture change and public sector transformation. Table 4.4 depicts a comparison between the processes, indicating the close relationship (see 4.10 *infra*). This relationship indicates that transforming the public service invariably will include changing the organisational culture of the public service. Stated differently, a transformation of the public service will have to take into account the changing of the existing organisational culture into one that will be supportive of the new values that inspired or brought about the transformation. The relationship between transformation and organisational culture is treated further below (see 4.10 *infra*).

4.10 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATION AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

The fact that organisational culture issues were also treated in the above section that deals primarily with transformation as a process (4.9.1 & 4.9.2 *supra*) should not lead to the conclusion that transformation is seen as synonymous to organisational culture. While the constructs and, by application, their accompanying phenomena are regarded as directly related for purposes of this thesis, the conclusion that organisational culture equals transformation is regarded as untenable for the following reasons:

- i. while organisational culture refers to assumptions, values, and artefacts, transformation, among other things, is the process whereby these values, artefacts and assumptions are converted;
- ii. while transformation refers to a process of "moving" from one set of circumstances to another after having discovered, and faced up to, anomalies in the *status quo*, organisational culture constitutes the underlying values, basic assumptions, and artefacts of the extant situation that needs change, espousal and execution, as well as the introduction of the new values that need to be espoused and put in action.

Table 4.4 Comparison between Transformation process and the organisational culture change process.

Transformation process	Organisational culture change process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a sense of urgency (4.9.1.1). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcing need for change from old to a new value system (3.5.3 i).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerful guiding coalition (4.9.1.2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imperative role of management in the announcing and adopting and exhibiting new value systems (3.5.3 i).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a vision or value system (4.9.1.3) Communicating the vision (4.9.1.4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating and communicating new sources of organisational culture (new artefacts, values and basic assumptions) (3.5.3 ii).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering others to act on the vision (4.9.1.5). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting socialisation processes to fit new values and assumptions. (3.5.3 iv). Destroying old cultures and sub-cultures by extensive job rotation (3.5.3 vi). Encouraging employee participation, creating high levels of trust (3.5.3 vi).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating and celebrating short-term victories (4.9.1.6). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewarding and encouraging espousers of new values, compelling those who are ambivalent, and dealing with resisters. (3.5.3 iii). Discrediting old cultural values and assumptions. Symbolically and physically removing artefacts associated with old values and assumptions (3.5.3 iv). Dismissal of culture carriers who cannot or will not adapt their old values and basic assumptions, nor adopt new values and basic assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidating progress and generating additional change (4.9.1.7). 	

The fore-going leads to the conclusion that transformation is the process whereby organisational culture is changed from being characterised by a particular set or sets of values, assumptions, and artefacts, to another ideal set or sets of values, artefacts, and assumptions. The transformation process is the manner in which a particular maternal holding culture undergoes an induced and highly managed metamorphosis to become a new maternal holding culture that reflects a new interpretive scheme(s) and new logic(s) of action.

The relationship between transformation and organisational culture, then, is that of process to results. The implication here is that the hoped for results must be specifically identified, articulated, communicated and pursued. For purposes of this thesis, therefore, transformation includes the processes whereby organisational culture is changed. Hence, the emphasis on the conscious management of the organisational culture change process rather than leaving it over to organic change (see 3.5.1 *supra*).

Organisational transformation, therefore, cannot take place successfully without giving specific attention to and transforming the organisational culture simultaneously (cf. Wilkins & Patterson 1985:264; Kotter 1995:59-67), *i.e.*; successful transformation is inextricably linked to changing the culture of an organisation. In support of the latter contention Levin and Sanger (1994:173) point out the important fact that:

"... (change) managers who understand and use an organisational culture perspective seem to have a considerable advantage over those who do not".

Their research has shown that while many managers involved in transformation were not consciously aware of utilising the organisational culture perspective in their transformation exercises, they were in fact espousing the concept. Schein (1985: 48) points out, however, that espousing, and dealing with, organisational culture while not being consciously aware of doing so often leads to gross oversimplification, and renders efforts at intervention ineffective and even harmful.

It seems evident therefore that the importance of the organisational culture perspective for transformation may be regarded as a *sine qua non*, and neglect of changing organisational culture while transforming the public service *"... produces needless impediments to organisational effectiveness and change"* (Levin & Sanger 1994:175; cf. Kotter 1995:67).

4.11 SCOPE AND NATURE OF TRANSFORMATION AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE CHANGE.

In the consideration of organisational culture transformation the focus ordinarily is placed on a relatively small private sector organisation or group of organisations (Hoffstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders 1990:286-316) or a single public school or public sector department (Maehr & Midgley 1996). It ordinarily involves not radical but incremental changes to the old organisational culture in an effort to fit it to the new vision and strategic direction pursued (Yahaya 1995: 15, 16; *cf.* 4.9.1(vi)).

The aims of the South African public sector transformation is so radically different from the previous public sector (see 4.3.ii *supra* and 5.9 & 6.5 *Infra*) that the question can very well be rephrased: "what degree of transformation is intended?", *i.e.* "does transformation of the South African public sector imply incremental changes to the public service, radical changes, or the obliteration of the old and the establishment of an entirely new public service?".

As transformation, reform, and the related phenomena which are regarded as important for this thesis may all be defined under the broad rubric of change, it is needful to understand how change takes place in the organisational setting in an effort to respond to the above question. Following is a brief analytical discussion of the change process.

4.11.1 Change in the organisational setting

Bounds, Dobbins and Fowler (1995:557) define planned change as:

"... the deliberate design and implementation of structural, procedural, technological, cultural, or personnel changes directed at increasing an organisation's effectiveness".

The type of planned change that is the concern of this thesis can be distinguished from other types of planned change in terms of at least two key dimensions, viz. the nature and the scope of the change.

4.11.1.1 Nature of change

The nature of change is concerned with:

- i. Whether the envisaged change deals with incremental modifications in present ways of interpretation and doing in the organisation, such as improving the efficiency of production processes or modifying work processes in order to better implement organisation strategy. This type of change is also referred to as *first-order change* (Cummings & Worley 1993:522; Bartunek 1984:355). First-order change is premised upon the assumption that modification of a schema already in use can guide individuals to grasp and implement new behaviours. In chapter five *infra* it is argued that the Botha reforms were, from the perspective of this thesis, merely first order change, *i.e.*, change or reforms of a very limited nature.

- ii. Whether change assumes large scale proportions, involving a radically new way of thinking about, and interpreting organisational dimensions. This type of change, also called *second-order change*, represents discontinuous shifts in interpretive schemes and logics of action (see 3.5 & 3.6 *supra*); involving the reframing of organisational paradigms and the change of norms and world views (Bounds, *et al.* 1995:556; Cummings & Worley 1993: 522; Watzlawick *et al* 1974:77-91, Bartunek 1984:355, 356).

Second-order change is characterised by fundamental shifts in the strategy or mission of the organisation. It entails changes in the deep structure or shared schemata that generate and give meaning to these activities, and is based on the assumption that "... a new schema is sometimes required if new behaviours are to be understood and adopted" (Bartunek & Moch 1994:24). An example from the South African public service illustrates the point well. While apartheid was the shared understanding on which the delivery of public goods and services were based, the primary transformation goal of the public service in the new South Africa is to provide a schema of inclusive democracy for the delivery of services (*cf.* South Africa1997d: 1.1, 1.2).

In order to enable a distinction between first order and second order change, the former will simply be referred to as change, while the latter will be designated transformation for purposes of this thesis. Bartunek (1984:356) points out that of the two types of change second-order change is much more rare, but evidently the only type likely to significantly impact upon structural forms and organisational culture. Certainly, the only type of change that would satisfy the *RDP* goals and which forms the motivation of the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* is second order, discontinuous change or transformation. This statement requires some further elaboration.

Second order change may typically be expected under circumstances, such as that which prevailed in South Africa during the late 1980's and early 1990's, where the liberation movements of the day posed great challenges to the prevailing political system and beliefs as manifested in apartheid occurred. During the early 1990's it also became clear that a major power shift was about to occur (see 5.2.2.2 *infra*). In relation to the apartheid public sector, the institution employed to carry out the pursuits of government (see 5.4 *infra*), the extant power crisis challenged the validity of the institutions' interpretive schemes, and derogated the adequacy and ability thereof to actually pursue the needs of a new South Africa, with new expectations of government and the public sector. (*cf.* Bartunek 1984: 364, 365).

Second order transformations can also be understood as occurring dialectically, according to Hegelian dialectics (Bullock & Stallybrass 1979; Hanks 1990), "...with the original interpretive schemes as the thesis, other ways of understanding as the antithesis, and what will emerge from their interaction as a synthesis" (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch as cited in Bartunek 1984:365). By virtue of the fact that the process is dialectical, it inevitably involves conflict between the perspectives involved, resulting in the crisis required by second order transformations.

In the case of the South African transformation the crisis was occasioned by the NP government's reluctance to initiate reform that would be acceptable to the majority of South Africans, as that would have threatened the White Afrikaner power base (see 5.2.2 *infra*). The coming to power of FW De Klerk in 1989 and the initiation of the Multi-party negotiations provided the mandate for challenging the interpretive

schemes of the NP government. The antithetical perspectives on the NP government's policies came to fruition during the Multi-party negotiations (see 5.2.2.2 *infra*) when the consensus was to accept the only feasible option, viz., democratic elections and the establishment of a Government of National Unity (Maphai 1994: 66-87; Du Plessis & Corder 1994: 2-12). The current transformation process can be interpreted as working towards the synthesis part of the dialectical process.

4.11.1.2 Scope of change

This dimension concerns itself with whether change is focused on a subsystem of the organisation, such as the reward system, or employment system, or whether change involves most or all parts or systems of the organisation.

The two dimensions described above combine to represent four types of change in organisations, viz., large-scale organisational change, adaptation, fundamental change, and reorientation (Cummings & Worley 1993:522, 523). These are illustrated in figure 4.5, and explained briefly below. The explanation primarily follows Cummings & Worley's (1993:522, 523) explication.

Figure 4.2 **Types of change**
(Cummings and Worley 1993:522)

		<i>DEGREE OF CHANGE</i>	
		Incremental	Radical
<i>SCOPE OF CHANGE</i>	Total System	Large-scale	Reorientation
	Sub-system	Adaptation	Fundamental

i. Large-scale change

Large-scale organisational change requires that incremental changes be made to most or all of the structures and processes of the organisation. Such changes are carried out within the extant organisational setting, strategy and mission, and may require improved and increased coordination among the various divisions. For purposes of motivation it may also require revision and modification in performance appraisal and reward systems.

ii. Adaptation

Adaptation involves incremental changes in subsystems of the organisation. These incremental changes are initiated and encouraged in response to environmental or strategic changes, and are limited to selected subsystems of the organisation in an effort to align itself to the changing environment. Organisational development efforts are primarily concerned with adaptation; for example the implementation of a new work design or the improvement of the functioning of a particular department.

iii. Fundamental change

Fundamental change is a category of change that involves discontinuous change in a department or departments of an organisation. The imperative for change in certain parts of an organisation may be brought about due to the evolution of the organisation itself, or result from dynamic forces within the environment of the organisation.

iv. Reorientation

Reorientation is the most drastic or radical change that an organisation can undertake. It involves substantially transforming the total organisation in response to deep-seated changes in the environment in which the organisation functions; such as global competition and technological innovation. In response to threats to its

survival the organisation may adopt drastic digression from extant orthodox practices.

The latter fourfold classification provide a basis upon which traditional planned change may be differentiated from organisational transformation. The classifications indicate that adaptation and large-scale change should result in the organisation functioning more effectively and efficiently within its ambient environment. These changes could be classified as first-order changes. Reorientation and fundamental changes, however, typically comprise deep-seated, discontinuous, or radical changes in the structures, functions, and processes of the organisation. Reorientation and fundamental change entail radical change in parts or the total organisation in order to support new strategies and value systems or visions. "These changes represent significant transformations of the organisation ... (resulting in) ... an entirely new way of operating and relating to the environment" (Cummings & Worley 1993:523; cf. Hodge, Anthony & Gales 1996:363, 364), an entirely new organisational culture, interpretive scheme, and logics of action.

Clearly this is the scope of change implicated by the transformation process under way in the South African public service. This thesis argues, based on the transformation priorities as articulated by Skweyiya and the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (1995a; cf. 4.5.1.2 *supra*) and the aspects which received emphasis in the actual transformation process (see chapter six *infra*) that the transformation process within the South African context evinces radical transformations in the total system, which can be described as discontinuous and *large-scale reorientation*. It seems, however, that the transformation drivers are focussing on the transformation of organisational structures, improvement of employment conditions, and the like, on the assumption that if these transformations are managed, than the more deep seated second order changes, such as the change of organisational culture, will inevitably take place. As argued above, this situation is not the ideal, since the changes may take place in unwanted, unpredictable, and harmful directions.

4.12 SYNTHESIS

Based on the analytical treatment of this chapter the following important aspects may be derived:

- i. Primarily the transformation process in the South African public service context has been brought about in an attempt (extant) to transform the public service interpretive scheme from one based on the grand apartheid policies of the erstwhile National Party government to one based on inclusive and democratic values inspired by the need for reconstruction and development of the South African society (South Africa 1995a; South Africa 1994; South Africa 1997d).
- ii. The stated change in interpretive schemes denotes a transformation of the organisational culture of the public service from one that is in pursuit of the execution of exclusivist policies to an organisational culture characterised by inclusivity and representivity (South Africa 1995a; South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b)) that recognises the richness and beneficial potentialities of South African heterogeneity in terms of cultures, races, value systems (*cf.* Human 1995: 8-10).
- iii. The transformation process underway in the South African society at large, and the public sector in particular focuses on large-scale discontinuous change. According to the argumentation in section 4.11.1 this indicates second-order transformation that involves transformation of core processes, mission and culture. A reference to change in the organisational culture, or change in interpretive scheme, or transformation would amount to the same thing since the transformation process has as intent a radical change of the fundamental beliefs and processes of and in the public service (Newhouse and Chapman 1996:996; *cf.* South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b); South Africa 1994: 10, 11; South Africa 1995a: 1.1-1.4; 2.2; Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:217, 218). A change in beliefs would bring in its wake transformations in attitudes, perceptions and behaviour (Schein 1996: E-mail).

- iv. Second order change implies more than a mere tinkering with organisational structures in an effort to establish new value systems, logics of action and interpretive schemes. Transformation could be understood, and hence undertaken, as discontinuous shifts in interpretative schemes and logics of action. This conclusion and concomitant directing of the process of transformation can only be undertaken and driven if the important relationship between organisational culture and transformation is recognised and understood. The understanding and interpretation of transformation as discontinuous shifts in interpretive schemes and logics of action suggests that extant interpretative schemes and logics of action have been discovered wanting in terms of their lack of proper responses to the environment internal and external to an organisation. On the basis of structure follows function, it would be attempting the futile to try and transform structures in reaction to a perceived lack of organisational response to ambient environments. A more appropriate response would be to review value systems, or more completely, organisational cultures, and adopt more appropriate organisational cultures and the concomitant interpretive schemes and logics of action that are responsive to the ambient environment. From a systems perspective, the real challenge would be to establish a new maternal holding culture that ideally is consistent with, and at the very least not inconsistent with, the value systems and needs of the ambient environment.
- v. The definition of change at 4.1.1 *supra* allows for the differentiation between organisational development (classified as first order change at 4.11.1 *supra*) and organisational transformation (classified as second-order change at 4.11.1 *supra*). The perspectives provided by approaching transformation as a change in interpretive schemes allow for the recognition of communication through language and symbols as a crucial aspect of the change process (Fox & Miller 1995: 50-67; 120-127; Thomas 1996:5-29; 2.8.1 and 2.9 *supra*) in addition to the rational-logical processes of organisational development (Evan 1993:397ff). As strategies result from managerial ideologies, it stands to reason that change leaders must, among other things, make use of the symbols inherent in their ideologies to create meaning for organisational members and the recipients of the products of their organisations. These

symbols include artefacts, rituals and myths (*cf.* 2.8 *supra*). Language is the means whereby the latter is communicated (Newhouse and Chapman 1996:996; Fox & Miller 1995: 50-67).

4.14 CONCLUSION

When transformation is considered, it is important that the context in which it is taking place be considered very carefully since it is evident that transformation, while it is a worldwide phenomenon, it is motivated by different criteria and it is in pursuit of vastly different goals. In light of this argument the transformation taking place in the South African public sector is to a large extent unique since it pursues goals not duplicable in other countries where transformation is taking place. The parallel process of transformation, reform, and rationalisation, should broadly be seen as components of the same change processes that need to take place in order to achieve the goals set by the *RDP* and the 1993 *Constitution*, as well as other enabling policies and legislation. All these, however, do not mean much without legitimate and credible drivers of the whole transformation process.

It seems evident, when considering the transformation goals, that organisational culture is inextricably linked to the transformation process. This is particularly true when defining transformation as second order, discontinuous change.

The purpose of the following chapter is to provide a historico-political context for the public service that is transformation taking place in South Africa. It will elaborate upon the reasons for and purposes for the latter transformation from a vantage point of a historical and political overview with the purpose of exposing, among other aspects, the value systems that lie behind the transformation.

CHAPTER FIVE: HISTORICO-POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICA: RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REFORM AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter represents an effort to understand the background to the government and public sector transformations that are taking place in South Africa from the organisational culture perspective. The approach that will be applied is not to provide an in-depth historical background to the transformation, neither to explain the political events that informed the reforms in any detail. It will instead be endeavoured to focus on the values that informed both the historical and political foundations of the reforms. Based upon the definition of organisational culture adopted in chapter 2 (see 2.9 *supra*), it is important that values and the basic assumptions that dictated historical, political, and governmental and public sector values be taken note of. Only in doing this will the historico-political transformations and reforms that had taken place within the South African context be understood correctly from an organisational culture perspective. Hence, the bias adopted in this chapter is necessitated by virtue of conceptual circumstance.

In pursuit of the above goals this chapter gives superficial attention to the historical background to the transformations and reforms of particularly the 1980's and the prelude to the reforms of the 1990's. The chapter then articulates some important findings on perceptions regarding the apartheid civil service that came about as a result of the historico-political developments in the country. Against the historico-political background, consideration is given, and conclusions are drawn with regards to whether transformation entails structural or cultural change. All the above sets the stage for the consideration of the value content of reforms and transformation within the South African context. Conclusions pertinent to the implications that the historico-political value systems of the erstwhile apartheid government and public service hold for transformations towards a new South African public service are articulated. Taken together, the above provides apparatus with which to draw some

conclusions in regard to possible reasons why the reforms under apartheid failed when considered from an organisational culture perspective.

In light of the above methodological caveat attention will now be turned to sketching of a brief historico-political context in order to understand the background to reforms in South African government, civil society and public sector.

5.2 A BRIEF HISTORICO-POLITICAL CONTEXTUALISATION FOR REFORMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In order to gain some perspective *vis-à-vis* the reforms and transformation in the South African context it is necessary to provide some political and historical perspective. It must be noted, however, that the purpose is not to provide an in-depth or detailed account of historical developments or past reforms; whether failed or successful, in South Africa over the centuries. The goal is rather to highlight, particularly from a historico-political viewpoint, the impact that values have had in the establishment and reforms or transformations of the South African government and public sector. In this regard the approach in this section will be analytical. Figure 1 provides a graphical depiction in the form of a time line of the historico-political developments in South Africa between the years 1652 and the early 1990's; *viz.*, the period that will be treated in the ensuing sections.

5.2.1 From 1652 to 1980's

Reforms within the South African governmental and political context, particularly since 1948, seem to have revolved around the ideology of apartheid; *i.e.* reforms related to apartheid either centripetally – towards apartheid, or centrifugally – away from apartheid.

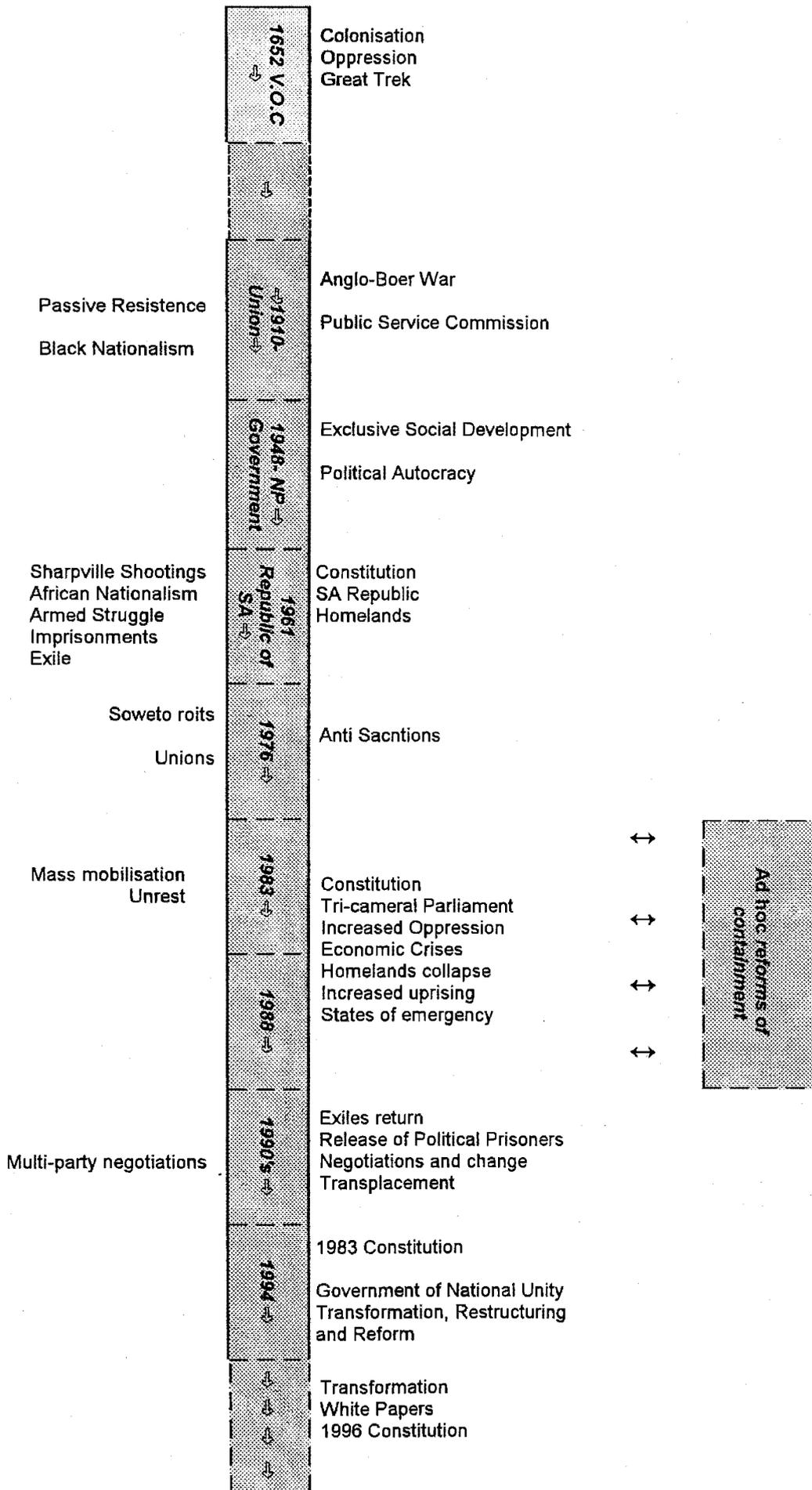


Figure 5.1
 ABBREVIATED TIME LINE OF HISTORICO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA (c. 1652-1990's)

It is a truism that, beginning in 1948 and entering into the 1990's, South African politics, society, economics, and all other aspects, were shaped by apartheid and its related values.

Before this time, however (going back to when the types and functions of governing institutions at the Cape of Good Hope were determined by the Dutch East India Company (*circa* 1700's), through British rule (*circa* 1800's to 1910)), independence was high on the agenda of the White Afrikaners. This period was punctuated by struggles for self-determination and autonomy by the White Settlers, against British hegemony and imperialism. As a result of these struggles, the South Africa Act (1909) came into effect on 31 May 1910, establishing the Union of South Africa; a semi-independent state (Cloete 1973:2-7; Venter 1989:1, 5, 6; Cloete, Fox, Müller, Schwella, Uys & van Rooyen 1997:Online).

The focus on the establishment of thorough functioning public institutions that would execute the policies of the state was emphasised by the establishment of a Public Service Commission in 1912. This Public Service Commission was tasked to make recommendations to political functionaries on civil service matters pertaining to the grading and classification of posts, appointments, promotions and the organisation and reorganisation of departments.

The Union Parliament became independent of British rule in 1934 with the passing of the *Status of the Union Act*, 1934 (Cloete 1973:15-22; Cloete, *et al.* 1997: Online). Governmental and administrative institutions and their functioning would, however, remain colonial to a large extent, based on the British Westminster system.

The next major step was the enactment of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1961, establishing an autonomous Republic of South Africa outside of the Commonwealth (Cloete 1973:15-22; Cloete, *et al.* 1997: Online). The coming into power of the National Party in 1948 saw the inauguration of the policy of separate development or apartheid. In order to operationalise this policy various legislative and administrative

institutions and practices were brought to life. An important example is the creation of the so-called independent states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei), and the self-governing territories (KwaNdebele, Lebowa, QwaQwa, Gazankulu, Kangwane, Kwa Zulu), within the South African geographical territory (South Africa 1997a: 2, 5). Ramaphosa (1996:18) points out that the homeland or Bantustan system was not intended as means of empowering Black South Africans, but rather as pools of labour to serve the economy of White South Africa "... without actually making the welfare of these workers the official responsibility of the White South African Government". The homeland policy was based on the Western conception of racial supremacy that prevailed during the first half of the twentieth century. Venter (1989:5; citing Thompson) asserts that with the demise of Western colonialism, the National Party government had to elaborate the racial supremacy assumption in order to legitimise its racial policies; this in spite of the general condemnation of the results of Hitler's Arian ideologies and policies during the 1940's (*cf.* Schrire & Silke 1997: 4). Its racial policies stemmed from the conviction that "... the Afrikaner nation had a right to use political and other measures to eradicate the real and imagined injustices they had suffered as a result of English capitalism and British colonialism" (Terreblance 1990: 190; Lever 1978:265-289).

The National Party government sought the exclusive advancement of the White Afrikaners by adopting and executing a three-pronged strategy (Terreblance 1990:190, 191), *viz.*:

- i. discriminatory measures against Blacks;
- ii. reserving employment opportunities in the public sector predominantly for White Afrikaners; and
- iii. redistribution and favouritism in order to eradicate the extant so-called poor White problem.

Through these efforts the poor White problem had been, for all practical purposes, successfully resolved by the mid 1960's.

It is worthwhile noting that especially the public administration was used as a vehicle to promote the interests of Afrikaner nationalism. The public administration was systematically enlarged and additional parastatals developed with the purpose of creating lucrative employment reserved primarily for White Afrikaners (Terreblance 1990:190; ANC 1992:1; Mokgoro 1991:31-35), uplifting them to a ruling economically wealthy White Afrikaner nation to the exclusion of Blacks.

5.2.2 From 1983 and beyond

Indications are that attempts towards constitutional reform within the South African context had perhaps its unintended watershed boost at the appointment of a cabinet committee in 1978, chaired by Mr PW Botha, then Minister of Defence. The purpose of this committee was to investigate possible changes to the South African Westminster type parliamentary system to accommodate and enable participation of other population groups (Booyesen & Van Wyk 1984:13). The recommendations of this committee resulted in the so-called "broadening of democracy" by the incorporation of Coloureds and Indians in the political process through the establishment in 1984 of a Parliament comprising three houses; viz. the House of Assembly, of Delegates, and of Representatives. The participation of these groups, however, was severely circumscribed. The Tri-cameral Parliament gave rise to *general* and *own affairs*, which demanded a triplication of administrative departments. Blacks remained excluded, with very restricted participation limited to structures outside of parliament. And the homeland system remained basically unchanged (Ranchod 1982:447-451; Van der Ross 1982: 521). Singh aptly describes the reforms that came about as a result of the 1983 Constitution as "... the *tri-cameral politics of change with containment* plied during the PW Botha era" (1992:52, emphasis supplied).

It is worth noting that the adoption of the 1983 Constitution was subjected to a referendum held on 2 November 1983. It received overwhelming support (66.3%) in favour of the so-called reforms that would ensue (Booyesen & Van Wyk 1984:13; *Hansard*, 30 March 1983, col.4383). Participation in the referendum, in fact a plebiscite, was restricted to Whites only (Booyesen & Van Wyk 1984:26).

Booyesen and Van Wyk (1984:39-53) on considering the Constitution of 1983 (Act 110 of 1983), state that the latter reveals intent of gradual, evolutionary constitutional change and development in South Africa, with assurance of White control over the reform process (*cf.* Friedman 1990:55, 56). The implication, therefore, seems to be that Whites were in general favour of the incremental reforms towards integration since it seemed guaranteed not to threaten their power, status and privileges. The *Constitution* of 1983, left important discriminatory political institutions, such as provincial councils for Whites and the self governing, so-called independent structures for Blacks, un-hindered. Provincial councils were abolished two years later in terms of the Provincial Government Act, 69 of 1985, and provision was made for the creation of Executive Committees for each province. These committees could, and did, include Blacks and Coloureds, albeit in an executive capacity rather than a legislative capacity (Marais 1989: 274).

In fact, the new discrimination disguised as reforms led to increases in central government employment by nearly 60%, while the administrations of the homelands grew by nearly 40% (Jammine 1991:55, 56). This, of course, led to a substantial increase in government departments (there were 19 education departments and 14 health departments, and 12 departments of housing), yielding bloated bureaucracies and inefficiencies as well as unprecedented strains on the South African economy; already struggling under the burden of sanctions that were called for, and imposed, due to apartheid policies.

In summary, South Africa had eleven different public services comprising the four independent states, the six self-governing territories, and the South African public service. If, however, the Tri-cameral Parliament with its resultant different

administrative implements is counted as it should be, viz., as three Parliaments and three public services, then the true number of public services must be inflated to thirteen. The expense related to the latter bloated bureaucracies obviously exacted high economic and other costs; all to retain apartheid and its value of promoting White interests to the detriment and exclusion of Black interests.

While there were radical increases in government employment, the key sectors of South African industry, viz. mining, construction, manufacturing, transport, and communication, saw declines in the level of employment (Jammie 1991:55; cf. Magyar 1989:221-227). The South African economy performed rather poorly from 1971, but particularly during the 1980's; all this as a result of the continued and "...enormous increase in Government's role in overall economic activity since 1971" (Jammie 1991:52; cf. Terreblance 1990:195). The reason for government's increased interference particularly after 1980 was to extract increased taxation in order to finance its increased spending in order to maintain Apartheid (Jammie 1991:50-59; Magyar 1989:204, 205).

Informed by these unwarranted excesses (Terreblance 1990:191), Marais (1989:190) opines "... with the rationalisation of the civil service in 1980 as well as the introduction of a Tri-cameral Parliament in 1984, the South African civil service was *once again*, and still is, in the throes of *excessive change*" (emphasis supplied).

5.2.2.1 Civil service reforms since 1980

When PW Botha became Prime Minister on 28 September 1978 (he became executive state President on 5 September 1985), he almost immediately embarked upon a rationalisation programme of the civil service. The rationalisation efforts, however, were aimed at unifying a fragmented civil service; meaning unifying of the White civil service, and not akin to the rationalisations and amalgamations that would be brought about during and after 1994. As indicated above (5.2.2 *supra*) the reforms brought about by Botha were reforms of containment, and not radical

reforms. No changes were made in the underlying values of the public sector or of government. Hence, a change in organisational culture was certainly not a priority (*cf.* Neal & Tromley 1995:45, 46)¹. These reforms were undertaken ostensibly to reduce the costs of administering the affairs of the country based upon the apartheid agenda and in response to the reigning total onslaught mentality so characteristic of Botha's reign (*cf.* Marais 1989: 292-297). It achieved quite the opposite, as indicated above.

In 1988 (12 April) then State President Botha revealed plans for future reforms that would ostensibly address the broadening of democracy to include all races, and to extend to Blacks a formal voice in central government decisions (Marais 1989:296, 297; Friedman 1990:7, 8). Efforts were also made to co-opt conservative Black groups while continuing to attempt to neutralise more authentic representatives of Black opinion. These, still, were not radical reforms in pursuit of an actual inclusive democracy, but rather a very bounded attempt toward incremental reform, a "cosmetic tinkering with apartheid" (Friedman 1990:8), which still amounted to a holding on to power and protection of the "rights" of Whites. This period was further characterised by brutal repression of the forces that opposed then State President Botha's ostensible reforms.

5.2.2.2 1989 : The De Klerk era of Transplacement

FW De Klerk acceded to power as Mr Botha's successor in 1989 (August) and the National Party achieved a grand victory in the general elections of September the same year. De Klerk, correctly interpreting the exigencies of the political environment at the time, approached the reform needs in an entirely different manner from his predecessor; releasing political prisoners, and relaxing some controls over opposition political activity in 1989. He went further along this route by legalising many prohibited organisations such as the ANC, PAC, and SACP; easing emergency restrictions and releasing Mr Mandela in February of 1990 (Du Plessis & Corder 1994:3; Schrire & Silke 1997: 7, 8).

De Klerk recognised that the NP government could not unilaterally determine the future political system of South Africa, and hence he determinedly moved to a *transplacement* process of negotiation with the ANC and other parties by means of CODESA I, II (1991-1992) and the Multi-Party Negotiating Process (1993). "*Transplacement*" as used here refers to the result of the combined actions of government and opposition parties when the dominant groups in both government and opposition recognise that they are incapable of unilaterally determining the future political system of their countries. This recognition invariably dawns on government and the opposition after they have tested each other's strength and resolve in a political dialectic (Bellos 1994:52, 53).

Bellos (1994:55, 56) argues that a *transplacement* became probable within the South African context due to the existence and development of the following requisite conditions:

- i. Firstly, the NP government concluded that the medium term costs of rule would be too high, and that the external and internal political environment was favourable to defend its core interests.
- ii. Secondly, the opposition at the negotiating table were aware of their lack of military strength to overthrow the NP regime, but that it was possible to achieve a negotiated settlement that would yield an order qualitatively different from apartheid.
- iii. Thirdly, both the NP government and the parties that participated in the Multi-party negotiating process concluded that sufficient time and prerequisite conditions would be available in the short and medium term to implement negotiated agreements.

The multi-party negotiations gave birth to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 200 of 1993), so-called *Interim Constitution*. The *Interim Constitution* represents an elite negotiated or brokered pact; accommodating a variety of interests groups (Bellos 1994:60), and providing retention of, and safeguards for, some

aspects of the old order, combining the old order with the new; particularly in relation to the administration of justice, the public service, the police and the defence forces (Du Plessis & Corder 1994:18, 20).

It should be emphasised here that the *Interim Constitution* (Act 200 of 1993), while representing radical socio-political transformation, does attempt to allay fears of by providing a measure of continuity with the old order. Du Plessis and Corder (1994:18 & 19) assert "... it is clear that the creation of a semblance of constitutional continuity was a vital element in persuading those who have grown accustomed to power to relinquish it." Continuity with the previous order is provided for in the *Interim Constitution* in specific clauses that protect the rights and privileges accumulated under the previous order. Hence, some continuities are provided to, for example, public officials who served the former government in relation to their rights and privileges. Section 212(7) of Act 200 of 1993 protects, for example, the pensions of public officials. Section 236(1)-(5) provides protection for the employment of public officials under certain conditions. These and other transitional arrangements guaranteed some continuance of the old order into the new. In accommodating these transitional arrangements in a new public administration, Mr Mandela was wont to state:

"It is impossible to say exactly at this stage what proportion of the civil servants should be retained. No person will simply be fired. But the whole civil service infrastructure will obviously be affected through re-incorporation of the TBVC states, ... Many civil servants may want to retire or resign and they should be eligible for standard retirement packages, ... What is expected of them is that they show full loyalty to a democratically elected government and will abide by the principles of non-racialism, and professional quality service" (Mandela 1993:11; emphasis supplied).

In keeping with the primary hypothesis of this thesis it is argued that such continuance of the old order into the new will invariably require a change in value systems and ideologies on the part of those public officials who number in the continuance of the old order into the new. Importing former public service values

and basic assumptions into a new public sector environment and practising these with impunity as if the former system still exists would be inconsistent with the new values and ideals espoused by the new government as stipulated in the *RDP*, the 1993 and 1996 *Constitutions* (Act 200 of 1993 and Act 108 of 1996; cf. 6.4, 6.5 & 6.6 *infra*). The latter issues are also implied in particularly the last sentence of the statement cited above. Achieving this requires changes in their interpretive schemes as manifested in the way they relate to the public, who have now become part of their service domain, as well as to new public officials who have become their colleagues, equals and often superiors in the new public service – particularly taking into consideration the ambition to transform the public service into one representing the South African population composition (see 6.2, 6.4.1.3, & 6.4.1.5 *infra*). The task of changing the interpretive schemes and logics of action (see 3.6 & 3.7 *infra*) of those who have accepted or functioned within a different organisational culture is not an easy one as “... unquestioning acceptance of historically based premises can lead to inflexibility and rigidity” (Cooper, Brady, Hidalgo-Hardeman, Hyde, Naff, Ott, & White 1998:253).

5.3 TRENDS THAT MADE REFORMS INEVITABLE

There were factors germane to the South African socio-economic and political realities during the 1980's that made reforms in the South African government and civil society inevitable. As to be expected from a systems perspective, there is no single catalyst for the reforms that invariably became the order of the day. Attempts to identify single catalysts are therefore not plausible, but nevertheless provide some insights into the multitude of motivators to change. Several of these catalysts are dealt with below.

5.3.1 High degree of heterogeneity

The characteristic racial, national, cultural, language and socio-economic realities of South Africa that were entrenched by apartheid legislation, taken together with the factors mentioned below, made it imperative for the government, public sector, and other socio- and cultural institutions to change in response to the ambient systemic environment and spirit; nationally and internationally (see 2.2.1.5 *supra*; cf. Dostal 1986: 2).

5.3.2 High degree of interdependence.

The increasing urbanisation of the 1980's that resulted in increasing economic participation, yielded a growing inter-dependence and class and geographical integration of the different population groups. The tentative responses to the abolition of petty apartheid during the late 1980's also contributed to the interdependence of races in South African society. The inevitable interdependence was set to continue to grow (Dostal 1986:3).

5.3.3 Power configuration

Traditionally economic power was concentrated in the hands of the White population group. Statistical trends during the 1980's in particular indicated that the balance of economic power was set to change slowly but ineluctably. It was evident, however, that the possession of economic power would remain significantly in the hands of Whites, sufficiently to exert strong pressure against political change which could threaten White self-determination (Dostal 1983:3 & 4; Jammie 1991: 56; cf. Van Zijl 1991: 82-93). Economic power still remains in the hands of Whites to the extent that a Nigerian minister chagrined the ANC, the ruling party, when he recently (1999) stated that South Africa currently has a Black government with a Black president, but that the economy still remains in the hands of Whites.

5.3.4 Growing power aspirations amongst Blacks, Coloureds and Indians.

The 1980's witnessed high levels of dissatisfaction and frustration with the political systems and economic conditions. The bringing into life of the radical Mass Democratic Movement, including the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the increased activities of trade unions (Maphai 1994:59-62) attested to the spirit of dissatisfaction. The periodic outbursts of violence and boycotts underlined this fact.

Swilling (1988:1-18) provides a helpful periodisation of particularly the decade between 1976 and late 1980's of South African resistance politics. This period reflects the growing power aspirations of Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians, and the responses of the state. This periodisation is briefly summarised and developed below. See also figure 5.1 in this regard.

i. 1976-1979: Rebellion, repression and the emergence of new leaders

This period was characterised by township rebellion, state response in the form of repression, and internal state conflict between "verligte" and "verkrampte" Whites.

Schrire and Silke (1997: 4) see the revolution in Portugal during 1974 as "... perhaps the catalyst for many of the dramatic changes in South Africa". The National Party and White South Africans in general reacted to the so-called Marxist threat from Angola and Mozambique with xenophobia. The government response was increased state exertion of power against the so-called these "threats."

The Soweto riots of 1976 instilled the NP government further with fear, and gave rise to further draconian clampdowns on freedom of expression and political association. Repression, bannings, and detentions without trial became commonplace. These and other riots and unrests were interpreted as orchestrations to plot the downfall of the White government, hence the government's heavy-handed responses.

ii. **1979-1984: Reform and resistance**

This period marked the genesis of the most important reformist strategies in the fields of industrial relations and urban policy. Within the National Party as well as Parliament the merits and demerits of reform were debated heatedly, resulting in polarisation among heretofore allies. This in itself was a catalyst for domestic upheaval. Blacks in particular challenged the so-called reforms in the workplace and communities.

This period also saw the development and adoption of the 1983 Constitution that ostensibly introduced real reforms for participation of the Non-White groups in South Africa (see 5.2.2 and 5.2.2.1 *supra*). This resulted in the introduction of the Tri-cameral Parliament, which excluded the Black majority and subordinated the Coloureds and Indians in Parliament. These designs were interpreted as attempts to perpetuate White domination.

iii. **Post 1984: Beyond total strategy to reformist policies**

The reformist policies of this period dispensed with basic premises of classic apartheid, including Coloureds and Indians in Parliament (see 5.2.2 and 5.2.2.1 *supra*), while excluding Blacks, accommodating them in structures external to Parliament.

In the mean time the nation-wide Black resistance escalated, generating levels of conflict between the state and Black (including Coloured and Indian) communities unprecedented in South African history (Frankel 1989:278, 279). The resistance strategies of Black communities were based on their disdain for the state-imposed reforms from above, since they called for completely different solutions to the existing crisis of oppression. Theirs were "... demands for change that affect the entire structure of civil society" (Swilling 1989:17; Frankel 1989: 288, 289). This in contrast to the state that seemed to define Black resistance as an end in itself (*cf.* Frankel 1989:281; Lever 1978:276).

Particularly the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the Vaal Triangle riots of September 1984 made it clear to the authorities and to the world that Blacks were no longer prepared to be quiescent in relation to the oppression perpetrated by the state.

While change and reform had not yet been clearly defined or agreed upon during the late 1980's, it nevertheless became clear that some form of radical change that would have to include Blacks in government had become inevitable. Mr Chris Heunis, the then Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, articulated this awareness when he stated that:

"(A)ll the parties in the council are in agreement that the status quo – societal, economic and constitutional, should not be sustained. Therefore, all parties are committed to change ... on all terrains of life" (cited in Cloete 1990: 24; translated from Afrikaans).

The above brief explication of catalysts for reforms in South Africa concludes the consideration of the historico-political verities that obtained in South Africa and that led to the current transformation and reforms.

In order to provide a better understanding of the impact of apartheid value systems on the public sector the following section will briefly outline some perceptions of the apartheid public service. These perceptions will also aid towards the arguments for the importance of changing value systems when driving transformation.

5.4 PERCEPTIONS OF THE APARTHEID PUBLIC SERVICE

Like the National Party government of the 1980's, the civil service was also perceived and experienced negatively by the Non-White groupings of South Africa. It was seen as colluding with government, executing unpopular and oppressive policies and measures (Sonn 1987:319). Mokgoro (1991:31) endorses this negative perception of the civil service, seeing it as having benefited a rather small minority of the population; oppressing Blacks through discrimination, corruption and inefficiency

in service delivery (*cf.* Ramaphosa 1996:18; Venter 1996: 42, 43). Mokgoro also describes the public service service of the 1980's with such adjectives as over-politicised, controlling, secretive, and wasteful. Koster (1993: 5) reporting on a workshop that purposed to establish a strategic agenda for public sector transformation, described the apartheid civil service environment as "diffuse, unfocused, confused and lacking in the commitment and capacity to give effect to social, economic and constitutional changes". In the ANC policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa the negative perceptions and experiences of Blacks in relation to government are reflected in the statement that:

"... (g)overnment has until now always been used to harass, divide and humiliate the great majority of South Africans, while securing privilege and relatively high standards of service for the minority ... For the first time we envisage a public service that is drawn from and serves the interests of the public as a whole" (1992:3).

These retrospective comments upon, and historico-political analyses of, the South African government and civil service, reflect the results of the policies of the NP government as experienced by the Black majorities of the country. This analysis indicates that the NP government deliberately set up particular structures through which it aimed to achieve the goals implicit in their political ideologies. It has been shown that the reform initiatives were mainly reforms of containment (Singh 1992: 520), perceived and experienced by many as mere entrenchment of apartheid rather than moving away from the latter. It seems evident that such negative perceptions and experiences will have to be addressed in order for the transformation to be successful (Ginwala cited in Mutschler 1998: Online).

From an organisational culture perspective it is important to emphasise, as is done below (see 5.6 *infra*), that the value system of the former government manifested in the executive functions of the public service, constituting "... the way we do things around here", viz., the public service organisational culture. The drivers of the transformation process in the public service have to take note of the need to urgently address entrenched ideologically based value systems of the public service, hence the organisational culture of the public service if the transformation process were to

be successful. As the former government's efforts towards reforms, which focussed mainly in reforms of certain government structures (such as the tri-cameral structures) and processes rather than value and ideological (read "organisational culture") transformations (Marais 1989:276, 277; Singh 1992: 520), it is important for the current transformation drivers not to focus solely on structural transformations in the hope that organisational culture will automatically change simultaneously. Addressing the important value transformations is therefore an imperative for transformation (see 4.10 *supra*).

It is important not to misconstrue the above as implying that structural change in the transformation process is not important. Indeed the precursor to transformation in the South African context, viz., rationalisation of the public service, attests to this importance. Some attention will be given to the relative significance of structural change in an effort to point out the relationship between structural change and organisation culture change or transformation in the total transformation process.

5.5 TRANSFORMATION: STRUCTURAL CHANGE OR CULTURAL CHANGE?

The above makes it clear that a new public service that enjoys legitimacy and that relates differently to the South African populace than did the apartheid public service can only be established on the basis of new ideologies, value systems and basic assumptions. Anchoring of new value systems and basic assumptions imply the establishment of a new organisational culture. Transformation drivers that are sensitive to the organisational culture perspective realise that the changing of organisational structures and institutional mechanisms are far from sufficient to address the real challenges of old values and basic assumptions within an environment where new values and ideologies are required to reign supreme (see 3.8.2, 4.11, 4.12 ii *supra*). In this regard, the substantive research undertaken by Kaul (1996:135) indicates that successful public sector reforms are premised upon close attention to both the organisational and attitudinal dimensions (*cf.* 3.5.3 ii, iii, iv, 3.8.2, 6.6). The context of Kaul's research (1996:131-136) indicates that by "attitudinal dimensions" he means the values and basic assumptions upon which

their interpretive schemes and logics of action are fashioned (see 2.8.2, 2.10 & 3.6 *supra*) while the organisational dimension relates to structural aspects.

It is expressly required that a new maternal holding culture (see 1.7.5 & 2.11 *supra*) be constructed by the individuals, body or bodies responsible for playing the driver, coordinator, and over-seer role(s) in the transformation of the public sector; viz., the Department of Public Service and Administration in cooperation with other bodies (see 4.5.1.3 *supra*). An analysis of whether this has actually taken place in the transformation of the South African public service is provided in chapter six *infra*.

In their research concerning the impact of organisational structure and of organisational culture on the reduction of behavioural variability among employees O'Neill, Beauvais & Scholl (1997) found that neither culture nor structure alone serves to reduce employee behaviour variability significantly. For significant reduction in behaviour variability to be achieved, it is imperative that both cultural and structural aspects be addressed simultaneously and consciously. O'Neill, *et al* (1997) suggest that a synthesis structural-cultural model be developed and applied in order to achieve the best reduction in behavioural variability.

Concluding from the latter, the choices before organisations that undertake transformation are at least two-fold; viz.:

- i. The prospective change may have the rather meager goals of changing formal structures or internal processes; viz. first order change (see 4.11 *supra*); or
- ii. The prospective change may be directed at altering, more fundamentally, the culture and concomitant behaviours of and in an organisation (see 4.10 & 4.11 *supra*).

Such an approach would be supported by Thompson and Sanders (1998:185) who assert "changing the culture of the organisation is probably the most effective mode of change in the long run if values are changed".

In accord with the latter, Thornhill (1994: 54) expresses the concern that the mere structural and institutional merging and integration of the thirteen different public services during the South African transformation process might not serve to achieve the goals set for the establishment of a new public service that operates within new and specifically defined value systems. He opines that the optimal public sector transformation scenario:

“... indicates the need to infuse new approaches into organisational structures to facilitate the development of a new public sector culture. Organisational change involves, therefore, more complicated processes than a mere restructuring of posts and renaming of government departments.”

This, too, is the argument of this thesis. The primary contention is that a change in values should at the very least serve as a prelude to the transformation of the South African public service (see 3.5.3 *supra*). The vision of a truly transformed South African public service will not be achieved with merely a change in organisational structures or change of authority and control patterns. In this regard, Degenaar (cited in Marais 1989:276, 277), in considering the principle of own and general affairs inherent in the *Regional Council Act* (Act 109 of 1985) of the former government, concludes that changing regional structures and relationships do not constitute actual reform. He referred to these structural and relational changes as the “... make believe world of good intentions”, confirming that the reforms during the 1980's were in verity reforms of containment, entrenching rather than changing the extant value systems (Singh 1992: 520).

A Canadian federal task force concerned with public service renewal concluded that the “fundamental change in corporate culture and management attitudes that is required should be pursued by developing a set of values and operating principles to guide the actions of public service managers”, and not primarily focus on structural adjustments (Kernaghan 1995:618). The Ghanian experience of civil service reforms since 1983 also attests to the contention that structural adjustment programmes are not enough for successful reforms. It needs to be augmented by, among other factors, the introduction of new value systems (Larbi & Batley Online).

From the context considered by Larbi & Batley (Online), it is clear that by “value systems” they have in mind the organisational culture as defined in this thesis.

Reforms of the Singapore civil service also attest to the fact that successful “... administrative reform involves both institutional and attitudinal changes” (Quah 1996:300; cf. 3.8.2 *infra*). Hence, when driving public sector reforms of the second order (see 4.11.1.1 *infra*), “... (p)rogressive managers are much more likely to focus on values. In doing so, these managers are seeking a basic transformation of their organisations, one far beyond what a change in structure could bring about” (Denhardt 1993:22).

It is evident that the structural integrations brought about by the rationalisation process that preceded the transformation process within the South African context since 1994 (see 4.5.2 *supra* & 6.2 *infra*) was a veritable positioning of the public service with the intent to introduce and effect specific value changes designed to break with the past. Hence, in principle, structural changes were designed to enable the introduction of new values.

These concerns will be further considered in chapter six *infra*, where the actual transformation process of the South African public service is treated.

5.6 VALUE CONTENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN REFORMS

When considering the historico-political developments in South Africa, it becomes evident that they had their operational basis in ethnic differentiation; a result of the efforts of White Afrikaner politicians to establish their superiority over Blacks whom they saw as inferior (Lever 1978:278). Dr HF Verwoerd, for example, asked the question:

“... is it not the White man who with his brain power and his organising creates everything of value in our civilization? Is it not a fact that the Non-White nations are essentially imitative, that they imitate and make use of things, but do not create anything?”

Similarly CP Mulder refers to the "sophisticated" (White) and the "unsophisticated" (Black) peoples (cited in Lever 1978:278).

A change brought about by the 1983 Constitution reflective of its ethnic premises was the restructuring of Parliament into three houses (see *supra* 5.2.2 and 5.2.2.1). Blacks were excluded from Parliament by the 1983 *Constitution*, perpetuating the apartheid *status quo* of the time, and enforcing compliance by utilising the elaborate state machinery in the form of the South African Police, and the South African Army, among others.

The distinction between so-called *own affairs* and *general affairs* (Act 110 of 1983; Article 31 and 32) serves as another example of the ethnic anchorage of the 1983 Constitution, which led many to the persuasion that the ruling party of the time was not intending to forego any significant political power (*cf.* Friedman 1990:25; Maphai 1994:46, 62).

In light of the above the conclusion that "... state institutions are not neutral machines that can be managed by "scientific management techniques" (Wooldridge & Cranko 1995:334; *cf.* 2.2.1.3 *supra*) is cogent.

It should be emphasised that state institutions such as the public service can be expected to "...reflect value systems and cultures which need to change in order to reflect, and deliver in terms of, new programmes and policies" (Wooldridge & Cranko 1995:334, emphasis supplied; *cf.* Lever 1978:276). La Touche (1983:262, 263) is thus correct when he describes government and its organisations, such as the public service, as resulting from politically and ideologically negotiated constructs. It is therefore untenable to conclude that the value systems of the apartheid government did not impact upon and radically influence the day-to-day practice of the civil service, and hence of the public officials employed in these institutions. Mutschler (1998: Online) asserts that "... the South African public sector was the key purveyor of apartheid, both implementing racial policy and maintaining those policies within its own bureaucratic structures". Mynhardt (1991:9) affirms that systems and

structures are used in order to maintain and sustain ideologies. Indeed, the civil service was used as the tool to execute the apartheid ideologies and policies of the government of the day (Loxton 1994: 113, 115), creating institutions and institutional climates (see 3.3 *supra*) that manifested a particular organisational culture and sub-culture(s) (see 3.2 *supra*) with particular value systems, artefacts, and basic assumptions; the three basic components of any organisational culture (see 2.7 to 2.10 *supra*).

In support of the latter, F Cloete² (1993:6) contends that the public service of the NP government had not only faithfully adopted NP apartheid policies, but had in addition assisted the NP government in fashioning apartheid ideologies into more feasible policy action plans (*cf.* Hanekom 1995: 67). JJN Cloete (1996:59) maintains that NP ideologies "... led to malenactments whereby the interests of only one section of the population were served (by the public sector) and the other sections were discriminated against". He further argues that these "malenactments" resulted in a "... lengthy period of misgovernment, maladministration, political strife and general social decay", yielding a societal culture "... extremely unfavourable for putting into effect the sophisticated dictates of democracy to bring about accountable government and administration" (Cloete 1996: 15; *cf.*; South Africa 1994: 1.2; 1995: 1.1; 1993: 212(1), (2)(a), (b), & (c)). Here Cloete affirms that the current government and public service are faced with an extremely difficult task of transformation due to inherited challenges.

The evidence seems to point in the direction that the apartheid civil service has attracted personnel who believed in the apartheid ideologies and resultant systems, giving effect to these ideologies. In this regard, Hanekom (1995:67) states: "... government can keep its promises *only if it has the full support of the officials in its employ and if the officials implement the policy of the government efficiently*" (emphasis supplied; *cf.* Encyclopaedia Britannica: Online). These public servants also served as instruments of its perpetuation. Says Bellos (1994:118); "The bureaucracy has been patterned on the concept that Black people are the objects of administration or control rather than part of the democratic political process". This, of

course, would be in keeping with the belief systems and values propagated by Verwoerd and others when the apartheid state was established and sustained. The interpretive schemes (see 3.6.2 *supra*) and the logics of action in practice in the public service, (see 3.6.1 *supra*) as well as the resulting actions of the public officials, were all informed by, and based upon the political aspirations of the apartheid government at the time.

5.6.1 Transformation, organisational culture, and values

If, as this thesis argues, it is so that organisational culture needs to be addressed when new politics and policies are to be institutionalised, then it stands to reason, based on the above, that the organisational culture of the old civil service need to receive specific attention in all reconstruction, reform, transformation, and other change efforts. This is so because the pursuit of new visions and ideals cannot be achieved within the context of defunct and discredited organisational cultures. This is well illustrated in the following example. During a debate at the final conference of the now defunct *South African Institute of Public Administration (SAIPA)* in 1997, the then Director-General of the Department of Public Service and Administration (*DPSA*), remarked that the public officials of the apartheid government were proficient in managing an apartheid agenda (*cf.* 5.6 *supra*). He continued that, while they may have had many years of experience under apartheid, that system did not prepare them for the new public service, which emphasises very different value systems. Ncholo's remark was provoked by a White public official who alleged that due to the experience and expertise that White public officials have gained under the NP government, they are ideally equipped to implement and manage the Reconstruction and Development Programme with a view to achieving optimal results. Ncholo's contention is premised upon the understanding that interpretive schemes will determine logics of action and eventual behaviour (see 3.6 *supra*). In other words, the values and basic assumptions that a public official holds dear will inform the interpretation of specific circumstances, issues, or what is required of him/her. This in turn will inform his or her logics of action and ultimately his or her

actions or behaviours in regard to what is expected of him/her. For public officials to pursue contextually determined developmental goals (see 4.3 & 4.4 *supra*) successfully, they will have to adopt new value systems upon which a development orientation is premised, and learn how to put these values in practice. Such an orientation may be obtained through training (Kim, Pindur & Reynolds 1995: 692) and socialisation (see 6.6.2 *infra*), among other techniques (see 6.4 *infra*). To state this differently, the value systems of the apartheid government and public service differ radically from the value systems of inclusivity, representivity and democracy that the new government and public service are in pursuit of (*cf.* South Africa 1993: sec 212(b) and (c); South Africa 1994:1; Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:218; Ramaphosa 1996:18). It is evident, then, that the public official who have functioned effectively and efficiently in the former public service will have to discard former values and adopt the values of the new public service in order to still remain effective and efficient. Being unable or unwilling to do this may result in cognitive dissonance and inability to "... loyally execute the policies of the government of the day in the performance of its administrative functions" (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(e)), and may manifest in passively or actively resisting the required transformation of the public service.

Within the scenario sketched above, it can be concluded that conflicting value systems presuppose conflicting organisational cultures (*cf.* South Africa 1993a: 11), and that public officials who are to be employed within the new public service will of necessity have to learn how to operate within the new organisational culture implied by the new values of the new public service, as the old way of "doing things around here", had become untenable (*cf.* South Africa 1994: 6, 9; Vil-Nkomo 1995:131, 132, 134). Hence, in order for transformation to be truly successful, public officials that functioned under the apartheid public services will have to undergo a change in value systems, *viz.* a change in interpretive schemes and logics of actions (see 6.5 & 6.6 *infra*).

Presumably this is what the now defunct Commission for Administration had in mind when it reported that some of the new initiatives in preparation for a new public

service in a new South Africa were to "... bring about a change of culture in the Public Service, and (to) inform public servants about the new dispensation and promote a positive disposition towards it" (South Africa 1993a: 11).

It follows, therefore, that it cannot simply be assumed that public service organisational culture(s) will of necessity change with new political and constitutional systems and the resultant transformed government and public service, and therefore need not be addressed directly and specifically. Such an approach towards transformation would be short sighted and not taking into account the ability of culture protectors to subvert and sabotage efforts for transformation, neither of the difficulties that attend second order transformations.

5.7 SCOPE OF TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Keating (Online) suggests that reforms are most successful if they are introduced on as comprehensive a scale as possible, *i.e.*, second order reforms (*cf.* 4.11.1.2 *supra*). Such comprehensive reforms provide, among others, the following advantages (Keating: Online):

- i. It can be most effective in providing the catalyst for the necessary change in culture. First order change have as aim changes in behaviour without necessarily changing the basic assumptions on which these behaviour changes are based, while second order change is much more radical and far reaching in this respect (see 4.11.1.2 | *supra*).
- ii. It has the appearance of fairness since the comprehensiveness of the reforms implies that everybody will be affected by it.
- iii. It can allow for negotiated trade-offs among the different interests of the parties involved. See, for example, 5.2.2.2 *supra*, where this was precisely the aim of the multi-party negotiations towards the establishment of a new South Africa.

The purpose of this thesis justifies further elaboration of particularly point i.

5.7.1 Catalyst for a change in organisational culture

It seems evident that any radical reforms invariably implies that there exists general agreement that the extant organisational culture needs to be changed on the basis that "... the way we do things 'round here" is understood as having become untenable and hence unacceptable. It therefore becomes imperative to give direct and more informed attention to the change of organisational culture when particularly second order reforms are undertaken. When the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) investigated acquisition and other deep-seated problems that manifested at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) despite recent reforms, it concluded that "... a comprehensive strategy is needed for cultural change" at the FAA (General Accounting Office 1996; Anderson 1997: 8, 9, 14, 21). This and related theory and research indicate conclusively that changes that focus on organisational structure exclusively would not lead to successful transformation. Concerted efforts should be launched to change organisational culture simultaneously.

Therefore, for transformations or reforms to be successful, much attention has to be given to transformations of the organisational culture (*cf.* 4.10 & 5.5 *supra*).

5.8 TRANSFORMATION AND MULTI-CULTURALITY

With reference to the violence between different races at some South African integrated schools Professor Jonathan Jansen (Bilcheck : 2000) stated that it is a mistake to assume that because different races are told to integrate they would do so successfully without definite interventions to achieve successful racial integration, racial tolerance and understanding. Adler (1983:481-499) concurs with Jansen's view. Her research indicates that "domestic multiculturalism" cannot simply be ignored, and that "... both the external function of government (*i.e.*, serving the

public) and the internal function of government (i.e., managing government employees) are strongly influenced by cultural diversity" (Adler 1983:483).

The latter assertions clearly implicate the need for definite interventions when dealing with diversities within the public sector. This is particularly needful when considering the fact that the South African public sector comprises the amalgamation of at least thirteen different public services. Simply ignoring the problems related to racial integration, or multi-culturalism, or giving a low priority to, it seems shortsighted and may lead to problems of efficient service delivery and internal and external public service relationships; particularly against the background of conflicting values and basic assumptions as sketched in this chapter. The recent (1999 & 2000) racial conflicts in the South African National Defence Force attest to this fact. About these conflicts the Minister of Defense, Mr Mosiuoa Lekota (2000) asserted that:

"It is no secret that after the demise of apartheid, in the process of forming the South African National Defense Force, we brought together men and women with fundamental (sic) different military cultures. ... By anybody (sic) standards it will be conceded that to bring together armed formations which had been at each other's throats is a difficult task, but when the problem is compounded by a complexity of such issues as racial divisions, uneven levels of training, discrepancies in income, competition of promotion and training opportunities, etc., the problem is overwhelming indeed."

This is where the articulation and establishment of a new organisational culture based upon new values, symbols and basic assumptions would conceivably contribute positively toward addressing the need for the mere fact that a new organisational culture implies that there are new ways of relating and doing, viz., new interpretive schemes and logics of action. It forces every public official to pursue a single focus that is likely to fall outside his or her parochial interest, values and basic assumptions; a goal pertaining to the achievement of the public interest as described in the South African *Constitutions*; which comprises different and new societal values (South Africa 1993: sec. 212(2)(b); Schedule 4 (XXX); South Africa 1994: 6, 14; South Africa 1996: sec. 195).

It is true, however, that in the pursuit of organisational goals, the personal goals of individuals and groups need to be accommodated as matters of high importance (see 2.2.1.3 *supra*), but in so far as it does not contradict the goal culture of the public service (see 3.2 *supra*).

5.9 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter is not primarily an attempt to detail the political context of the South African reforms, nor to provide the historical detail *vis-à-vis* the development of the apartheid state and civil service, but rather an endeavour to, from an ethnographic perspective, highlight what can be termed the historico-political value systems that prevailed prior to 1994 that served to give birth to the South African government and public service, and that provided motivation and ideologies for its continued existence.

What is evident from the foregoing sections of this chapter is that the historico-political developments in South African society were, for the most part, determined by the ideological pursuits of the South African government, which was predicated upon National Party ideologies since 1948. Since the public service was utilised for executing the policies and ideologies of the former government, it was instilled with particular value systems, and developed concomitant organisational culture and behaviour systems. Any transformation process, therefore, will have to address and alter or replace the primary value systems (see 3.3.5.3; 4.9 & 4.10) in order to be successful, since structural adjustments or transformations are not enough to bring about the discontinuous changes required to move from the old order to the new.

Specific aspects that the chapter highlighted may be reiterated, viz.:

- i. The civil service prior to 1994 was utilised by government as a tool to bring its policies to fruition. It was clear that the Nationalist Party, from the onset, had particular ideological pursuits that it wanted to achieve. It articulated these ideologies eloquently on all platforms, and very convincingly chiefly to White

- Afrikaners. Hence it established a distinct way of thinking and doing among Afrikaners, and particularly in the public service as this was the main vehicle through which it could execute its policies; this often to the detriment of the economy of the country, and very definitely to the detriment of its relationships externally and internally (*cf.* Schire & Silke 1997:3-15).
- ii. The organisational culture that it established in the public service was geared for serving particularly White South Africans. Its main aim was not to serve the peoples of the country, but to resolutely pursue the nationalist dream. Resourcing the public service predominantly with White Afrikaner males (see tables 6.1-6.3; and sections 6.2 & 6.4.1.3 *infra*), it managed to achieve specific national cultural and organisational cultural goals that became well established in the minds, actions and institutions of the public service and of the public. In order to bring about the necessary transformation that will address this discrepancy affirmative action is implied as an important transformation priority (see 6.4.1.3 *infra*).
 - iii. Particular logics of action and interpretive schemes became established, hence, in order to achieve any measure of success in transforming the public service, it has been contended (see 5.5 & 5.6 *supra*) that addressing structures, salary systems, human resource needs, and the like, as important as these aspects are in themselves, misses the goals of the transformation as envisaged by the *RDP* and the *Constitutions*; viz., the establishment of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist society, based on equality, sustainable development, and final eradication of the results of apartheid (South Africa 1994: 1.1, 1.2; see 4.5 *supra*; *cf.* 5.4 *supra*). Transformation, therefore, is not only about changing the composition of the public service in order to make it more representative of South African society on the basis of ethnicity, gender, and disability, nor is it about only bringing salaries and benefits on par. It is essentially, and more importantly, about changing the reigning interpretive schemes, logics of action, and hence the organisational culture of a personnel corps that have, among other things, experienced either excesses or poverties of means, opportunities, and education, but also are likely to

approach employment in the public service from differing perspectives due to differing basic assumptions due to conflicting value systems.

In accord with chapter four, therefore, this chapter indicated that for the *DPSA* to steer the transformation of the public service successfully, it will have to attend to the changing of value systems, basic assumptions, and hence the attitudes of all public officials. This is premised upon the research findings cited which clearly indicate that organisational culture is a *sine qua non* of transformation (see 4.10 *supra*), and that structural transformation falls short of the ideals of successful transformation.

Chapter five has also shown that the success of the apartheid public service was, according to many authorities in Public Administration and Political Science; nationally and internationally, predicated upon the establishment of the former government's ideologies and value pursuits in the public service. It is therefore logical to conclude that the *DPSA* as main driver of public service transformation will have to endeavour, with the support of the legislative and executive authorities of government, to enable the instilling of the value system and ideologies of the new government in the public service in the process of transformation. This would also indicate a changing of the organisational culture of the public service along the lines of the processes as indicated at 3.5.3, 4.9.1 and 4.9.2 *supra*.

The next chapter, chapter six, will consider the transformation process in the South African public service in light of the afore-going chapters. Particular emphasis will be placed on seeking evidence of an understanding of the need to change organisational culture and the executing of this understanding on the part of the *DPSA*, the government department tasked with driving the transformation process.

5.11 Endnotes

¹ This already points to a very different set of motivations for undertaking reform between the ruling National Party and the current reforms of the ANC driven GNU. See chapter 6 *infra*.

² Note that the initials of the authors are merely provided here in an attempt to distinguish between the two Cloetes cited here in such close proximity.

CHAPTER SIX: THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE – IN PURSUIT OF A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE CULTURE?

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a brief review of the transformation process in the South African public service, and to focus on the role the Department of Public Service and Administration (*DP*SA) played in the transformation of the public service in the period 1994 to 1999. This chapter will specifically focus on the attention, if any, given to the changing of public sector organisational culture in the transformation process. This will be done in light of the arguments developed in the previous chapters; the most important of which are:

- i. That true second order transformation requires not only the transformation of structures and functions, but also the transformation of the value systems embedded in the public sector. To be more specific, changing organisational structures of the erstwhile apartheid system (e.g. the amalgamation of eleven public services into one) will not amount to much unless the basic assumptions and interpretive schemes upon which these structures and their incumbents function are also changed (see 4.10 & 5.6 & 5.7 *supra*).
- ii. That organisational culture will invariably change when second order transformation takes place, but at a slow, and unmanaged pace and process. It therefore would be more effective if the transformation process also focuses on the informed management and transformation of organisational culture perspective (3.5.1.1 *supra*).
- iii. That in order to manage organisational culture, it is imperative to know what organisational culture is, and to distinguish it from related phenomena; such as organisational climate. While manipulation of the latter might ostensibly bring about a change in organisational culture, organisational culture is likely to remain unchanged. It has been indicated, however, that a change in

organisational culture invariably brings about changes in the organisational climates (3.5 & 4.10 *supra*).

- iv. That enough time is allotted for the transformation process to be successful, realising that transformation should not be regarded as an event, but rather as a continual process comprising many events.

The qualitative nature of organisational culture research (see 1.5 & 2.3 *supra*) prescribes that the following resources will predominate as providers of information from which an understanding of the South African public sector transformation process and the emphasis, or lack thereof, on organisational culture may be gleaned:

- i. Policy documents and other legislation, such as the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (South Africa 1995a), the *Public Service Laws Amendment Act* (South Africa 1997i) and others that will be identified where appropriate. These will be subjected to in-depth content and discourse analyses.
- ii. Interviews and discussions with relevant change agents.
- iii. Speeches, press releases and other published statements by relevant change agents, particularly from the Department of Public Service and Administration. These are likewise subjected to content and discourse analyses.
- iv. Public Service Commission and public service departmental reports; and
- v. Relevant literature pertaining to the transformation process particularly focussing on the public service.
- vi. Relevant literature pertaining to the transformation process from without the public service.

The above sources will be approached from the perspective of, and informed by, the preceding chapters.

The method employed in this chapter will be to briefly sketch aspects relating to the rationalisation process, then to, from an ethnographic perspective, consider what the *DPSA* has done in relation to public sector transformation over the period 1994 to 1998, informed by Kotters' model of the transformation process (see 4.9.1 *supra*) in

conjunction with the organisational culture change process described in chapter three (see 3.5.3 *supra*). This will be followed by an evaluation of the work of the *DPSA* in relation to its organisational culture change activities.

An important question that will be considered is whether the *DPSA* as primary driver of transformation has been successful in establishing a maternal holding culture, informing and leading the other public service departments, national and provincial (see 1.7.6 *supra*), which constitute sub-cultures (see 3.2 *supra*), in the establishment of organisational cultures that pursue the same values as the maternal holding culture; values derived from the new vision and goals of the new South African government (see 6.8 *Infra*).

6.2 The rationalisation process – an overview

As noted in chapter four (see 4.5.2 *supra*), rationalisation served as a necessary precursor to the transformation of the public service. The reason for the chronological precedence of rationalisation is predicated upon the need to amalgamate the eleven apartheid public services into one representative South African public service (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b); South Africa 1995a: chapter 5).

The rationalisation of the South African public service commenced with the proclamation of the new *Public Service Act* on 3 June 1994. The purpose of rationalisation, as determined by the 1993 *Constitution* (Act 200 of 1993: 212(b) and (c)), was to establish and "... promote an efficient public administration broadly representative of the South African community", that would "... serve all members of the public in an unbiased and impartial manner". This necessitated the creation of a single public service in place of the plurality of public services that resulted from the policy aspirations of the previous dispensation.

The pursuits of the rationalisation process, driven by the Public Service Commission (South Africa 1993: 209(1) and (2), 238(3); South Africa 1994: 4(1)-(2)) on behalf of the national government (South Africa 1993:237(2)(i)) and in conjunction with the

now defunct Provincial Service Commissions (South Africa 1996:3; South Africa 1997a: 37, 38), meant that:

- i. The eleven systems of government (see 4.5.2.1 & 4.5.2.2 *supra*), encompassing fifteen discrete administrations that were in existence in 1994, had to be amalgamated into one "... non-partisan, career-orientated public service broadly representative of the South African community, functioning on a basis of fairness and which shall serve all members or (*sic*) the public in an unbiased and impartial manner, and shall, ... loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day in the performance of its administrative functions" (South Africa 1993: Schedule 4, principle XXX; *cf.* South Africa 1994: Chapter 5).
- ii. Enabling legislation had to be put in place in order to achieve the rationalisation of the public service as mandated by the 1993 *Constitution*. This was also necessary for the envisaged total transformation of the South African society as envisaged by the 1993 *Constitution* and the *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development* (1994a).

Wiatr (1996: 145), citing the Polish transformation experience, indicates that if a new government aims to transform the administration inherited from its predecessor, it invariably has to introduce laws and regulations alien to the past experience of the inherited bureaucracy, and to reform the latter in accordance with the desired model. The promulgation of new legislation obviously implied the repeal of many old pieces of legislation that did not fit the agenda of the new Government (Kekana 1998: Interview). This was partially achieved by the enactment and proclamation of a rationalised *Public Service Act* on 3 June 1994 and the issuing of rationalised *Public Service Regulations* as well as a *Public Service Code* on 10 June 1994 (Sangweni 1994: 10, 11; *cf.* South Africa 1997a: 10-22).

The fact that each of the eleven systems of government that existed in the pre-rationalised South African public service had its own body of statutes and subordinate legal prescripts, required extensive drafting of new legislation and

the re-ordering of the personnel corps in order to establish uniformity in structure and conditions of service for the approximately 1.2 million public officials that would be taken up into the new public service (South Africa 1997a: 1-6). Annexure 2 (South Africa 1994b: Schedule 3) represents a list of laws repealed under the *Public Service Act* of 1994 in order to enable the rationalisation process.

- iii. The staffing of the rationalized public service would be faced with salient challenges, viz:
 - a. The *Constitutional* stipulation that all serving public servants would continue in the service of the new public service (South Africa 1993: section 236; South Africa 1997a: 6; *cf.* 72), over against the expected large scale redundancy that would arise due to rationalisation of the public service, with its inevitable lay-offs as a result of satisfying the *RDP* imperative of reducing the size of the public service (South Africa 1994: 1.4.14; *cf.* chapter 5); and
 - b. The *Constitutional* imperative concerning a public service broadly representative of the South African society (South Africa 1993: Schedule 4, Principle XXX) and the requirements of accessibility to all South African citizens (South Africa 1993: 212 (3)) over against the merit principle (South Africa 1993: 212(4)) which stipulates that in any appointment or filling of posts, the qualifications, level of training, merit, efficiency and suitability of candidates should be taken into account (*cf.* South Africa 1997a: 8).
 - c. The reigning psychological environment of grave concern in regard to possible job losses among particularly White public officials who served in the erstwhile South African public service (Wessels & Viljoen 1992: 198-217; Wessels 1994: 195-199; South Africa 1997a: 72) as opposed to the heightened expectations of mainly Blacks who have been, by virtue of apartheid politics, mostly excluded from managerial positions in the public service (South Africa 1997a: 8; Schlemmer 1991: 167-169; *cf.* table 1), should be managed circumspectly. "Reconciling the manifest fears, anxieties, hopes and expectations of a great many people would obviously place great demands on the staffing process" (South Africa 1997a: 8)

driven by the Public Service Commission as it existed at that time (see 6.2.1 & 6.3 *infra*).

Table 6.1 indicates that in 1990 the senior public officials in the national government departments were overwhelmingly White (98.53%), while only 1.47% was Non-White. If the numbers had been proportionally representative of the South African population, there would have been 209 (14%) White senior public officials and 1286 (86%) Non-White senior public officials in the national government departments. The comments regarding fear versus expectations are thus clearly illustrated.

Table 6.1: The racial composition of the Senior (directors and above) public service echelon in the South African National Government Departments, 1990 (excluding self-governing territories and the TBVC states).

White	Coloured	Indian	Black	Total
1473	9	12	1	1495
98.53%	0.6%	0.8%	0.07%	100%

(Source: adapted from Bellos, 1994: 120)

- iv. By virtue of the relationship between rationalisation and transformation (see 4.5.2.1 & 4.6 *supra*), rationalisation had to take place speedily in order for the transformation process to proceed. The *Public Service Act* allotted the Public Service Commission just under one year to complete the process of public service rationalisation, designating 27 April 1995, the first anniversary of democratic elections in South Africa, as the target date (South Africa 1994b: 4(7)). In point of fact, the rationalisation process was only "substantially finalised" during late 1996 (South Africa 1997a: 9, 21); setting the stage for the transformation process, as defined within the South African public service

context (see 4.5 *supra*; South Africa 1997a: 98). The integrated nature of rationalisation and transformation is emphasised by the fact that the rationalisation process also addressed a number of transformation projects, such as training, ethics and values, and the establishment of a new model for state administration (South Africa 1997a: 98-103).

6.2.1 Results of the rationalisation process

The rationalisation process yielded a South African public service vastly different from the public service of the previous regime in many respects (see 6.5 *infra*). The new public service, however, also evinced some of the characteristics of the previous regime. The latter was achieved by design, consistent with the provisions of the 1993 *Constitution* (Principle XXX of Schedule 4) that resulted from the Multi-party negotiations (see 5.2.2.2 *supra*).

The rationalisation process, as driven and managed by the Public Service Commission, focussed on the following aspects (1997a):

- i. Creation of a new legal framework in order to enable the rationalisation process and assignment of powers for the administration of these laws;
- ii. Amalgamation of the fragmented public services;
- iii. Organisational and administrative rationalisation;
- iv. Rationalisation of terms and conditions of service; and
- v. Staffing of the rationalised organisational structures.

These avenues were embarked upon in order to create the unified, non-fragmented, public service envisioned by the *RDP* (1994: 5.4.1, *cf.* 4.4.3; South Africa 1997a: 1 (a) & (b)) and the 1993 *Constitution* (Schedule 4, Principle XXX; *cf.* South Africa 1995: 1.1).

While the basic pursuits of the rationalisation process were substantially complete by late 1996, it should be noted that rationalisation is regarded as a continuous process (Sangweni 1994). In light of the latter the Public Service Commission had committed

itself to continue with the systematic revision, modernisation and simplification of personnel systems and practices in the public service. The office of the Public Service Commission itself would, however, undergo drastic and rapid rationalisation and transformation, shedding approximately 400 of its staff and undergoing a reduction of its powers and functions, transferring its executive functions, to the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (Skweyiya 1996; South Africa 1997c: 17; South Africa 1997g; cf. Ramaite 1996:9; Muthien 1997: 5-18). This resulted from the contention that the 1993 Constitution had conferred excessive executive powers and functions upon the Public Service Commission, something out of the ordinary in relation to other Public Service Commissions internally (Ramaite 1996:9; Muthien 1997: 5-18; South Africa 1998: 3.5; cf. 6.3 *infra*).

Taking into account the preceding background, attention will be turned to the transformation process, focussing particularly on the role of the *DPSA* and the attention, if any, it has given to organisational culture transformation. The consideration of the transformation process will, however, be introduced by first turning attention to the key responsibilities of the *DPSA* in relation to public service transformation.

6.3 Role of the *DPSA* – mandates and relationships

The mandate of the *DPSA* to serve as principal overseer, driver, and coordinator of public service transformation (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1) derives primarily from the 1993 *Constitution* (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b)) and the *RDP* (1994: chapter 5). The forerunner of the *DPSA*, viz., the Office of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (*OMPSA*) was established in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994, to provide infrastructural support for the Minister of the Public Service and Administration, "... and to play a crucial role in helping to drive and coordinate the transformation process" (South Africa 1995a: 3.2 (g)). Its main functions revolved around the functional areas of public service policy and reform, and labour relations policy and central negotiations (South Africa 1995a: 3.2 (g)); South Africa 1997a:

chapter 4, 2.4). It soon became clear, however, that the *OMP*SA, by virtue of its limited powers and size, could not provide the necessary support to the Minister. In contrast to the latter the functions and powers of the Public Service Commission (*PSC*) (*Public Service Act* 1994: 3; Muthien 1997: 5-18), transformed from the erstwhile Commission for Administration (South Africa 1984: 3; Koster 1993: 6) by promulgation of the *Public Service Act* (South Africa 1994: 3), were inconsistent with international precedents as well as with the transformation requirements placed upon the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (Muthien 1997: 7). Hartley describes the Commission as it existed up to 1996 as "ministerial enemy number one", since it evidently was "blocking efforts to reform the public service" (Hartley 1996: 23; cf. Ramaite 1996: 9).

The latter state of affairs required urgent change. During 1996 (21 February) Cabinet approved the transfer of the policy-making functions of the Public Service Commission to the Minister for the Public Service and Administration. This allowed for the creation of the Department of Public Service and Administration (*DPSA*), replacing the Office of the Minister of the Public Service and Administration (*OMP*SA) with a body that had much more substantial powers. The *DPSA* was vested with powers to develop policy, to formulate norms and standards, and to determine administrative practices, as well as represent the state as collective employer (Skweyiya 1996; South Africa 1997c: 3; Muthien 1997: 11, 12).

The executive functions of the *PSC* were delegated to line-function departments, thereby vesting them with considerable management autonomy and responsibility (Skweyiya 1996; Muthien 1997: 11, 12). The *PSC*, now with reduced power and authority, was assigned the role of promoting the basic values and principles of public administration and of monitoring public administration and research (Skweyiya 1996). The revised status of the *PSC* was later articulated in the new *Constitution* (Act 108 of 1996: 196).

The changes mentioned above were effected by the promulgation in 1997 of the *Public Service Laws Amendment Bill* and the *Public Service Commission Bill* by the *DPSA* (South Africa 1997c: 17; Kekana 1998: Interview). The latter Bill abolished the Provincial Service Commissions and established a single new Public Service Commission for the whole country (South Africa 1997c: 17).

The creation of the *DPSA* in response to the need for "... an instrument through which the public service could be effectively transformed" (South Africa 1997c: 3) allowed the Minister for Public Service and Administration to effectively take charge, on behalf of Parliament, to drive, oversee, and coordinate the transformation of the public service. Through the *DPSA* the Minister could discharge specific key responsibilities related to public service transformation. These key responsibilities are explicated at 6.10 *infra* in relation to organisational culture change. They are briefly stated here, viz.:

- i. Translating the broad policy framework contained in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* into achievable policy objectives, performance measures, targets and time frames.
- ii. Ensuring that the latter process is based on effective consultation and liaison with the now defunct Service Commissions, Directors-General, public service unions and other key agencies and stakeholders, within and outside the public service, at both national and provincial levels.
- iii. Ensuring that the transformation process is effectively coordinated at both national and provincial levels.
- iv. Developing an effective communications strategy and structures to ensure that the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Sector*, the broader transformation process, and national standards, performance measures, and targets are well publicised within and outside the public service.
- v. Developing a financial resource strategy to support the transformation process, taking into account the specific needs of individual departments and provinces.
- vi. Establishing an effective research strategy and structures to support the transformation process.
- vii. Building the capacity of the *DPSA* in terms of human and financial resources.

The performance of the above key responsibilities is enabled by the explicated transfer of powers from the *PSC* to the Minister and, indirectly, to the *DPSA* (see Skweyiya 1996; Vil-Nkomo 1996: Interview; Muthien 1997: 15-18).

In addition to the latter, the *DPSA* also supported the Minister in discharging his responsibilities with regard to the broader public service. These responsibilities (South Africa 1997c: 4) are briefly summarised below:

- i. Providing political executive leadership in relation to restructuring and transformation of the public service.
- ii. Formulating and clearing government policy *vis-à-vis* public service and administration with Cabinet.
- iii. Cooperating with Cabinet colleagues in regard to public service matters; providing, as and where necessary, advice, assistance, and information about correct applications of policy and procedures.
- iv. Promotion of political executive coordination regarding the public service and administration between national and provincial spheres of government, and in this manner highlighting the necessary integratedness of the public service system serving the South African populace.
- v. As Government spokesperson on matters concerning the public service and administration, dealing with Parliament.
- vi. Responding to and influencing public opinion regarding government and administration.
- vii. Interacting with donor organisations interested in supporting development in South Africa.
- viii. Acting on behalf of Cabinet as collective employer in the conducting of labour relations.

It should be clear from the above brief representation of the responsibilities of the Minister of Public Service and Administration, and hence of the *DPSA*, that the said parties function in consort with other national and provincial departments, fully aware of the delegated executive powers vested in each state department, nationally and provincially. In this regard the *DPSA*, on behalf of the Minister, and indirectly, on behalf of Cabinet, is mandated to drive, coordinate and oversee the transformation process cooperatively. The *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* constitutes a statement of intent, recognising and respecting the need for each national and provincial department to develop their own specific implementation strategies. These strategies, however, "... should be located within the policy

framework provided" by the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (South Africa 1995a: 1.3).

It is in light of these roles of the Minister and the *DPSA* that this thesis emphasises the need for the establishment of a maternal holding culture with respect to matters relating to the organisational culture change in the public service (see 1.7.5 & 2.11 *supra* & 6.7 *infra*). This should be done in full recognition of, and regard for, the independence of each national and provincial department, and the related political and administrative functionalities, but more importantly in the recognition of the need for collective action given the *RDP* and *Constitutional* mandates of service delivery premised upon new public service values (see 6.8 *infra*; cf. 5.6 & 6.5 *infra*). Hence, it should be emphasised that the *DPSA* is authorised to perform the key functions and responsibilities related to transformation of the public service in consultation with the other identified role players (Singh 1996: Interview; South Africa 1995a: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3). See also section 6.7 *infra* in regard to the establishment of a maternal holding culture.

6.4 The transformation process – changing the organisational culture of the South African public service?

In line with the rationalisation process, the transformation process was embarked upon with the main aim of driving the implementation of the *RDP* (1995: 1.1). The *RDP* goals necessitated the articulation of a clear vision for the new public service. The following vision was developed and adopted:

The Government of National Unity is committed to continually improving the lives of the people of South Africa by a transformed public service which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all.

In line with the vision, the Government developed the following mission statement:

The creation of a people centred and people driven public service, which is characterised by equity, quality, timeousness and a strong code of ethics.

This mission statement is based upon the premise that "... it is up to the Public Service, as the Government's most important instrument, to normalize (South African) society (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:218)." Hanekom & Bain (1991) argue that "... only the government and its executive institutions are in the unique position to interpret the *public interest* and hence also the *public will*" (cf. Loxton 1994:113-115). The latter contention is based on the assumption that government has the right to employ its executive "instrument" to impact upon society, or as Skweyiya and Vil-Nkomo state "to normalize society". The vision and mission statements, due to the fact that they are consistent with the provisions of the 1993 Constitution (1993: 212 (2)(b), Schedule 4, Principle XXX) and the *RDP* (ANC 1994; South Africa 1995a), captured the primary direction and value system of the new government.

6.4.1 Priority areas

For purposes of public service transformation in pursuit of the fruition of the vision and mission statement, the *White Paper on Transformation of the South African Public Service* identifies and articulates eight priority areas (1995a: 5.1; see 4.5.1.2 *supra*); viz.:

- i. Rationalisation and restructuring to ensure a unified, integrated and leaner public service.
- ii. Institution building and management to promote greater accountability and organisational and managerial effectiveness.
- iii. Representativeness and affirmative action.
- iv. Transforming service delivery to meet basic needs and redress past imbalances.
- v. The democratisation of the state.
- vi. Human resource development.
- vii. Employment conditions and labour relations.
- viii. The promotion of a professional service ethos.

As will be seen below (6.4.1.2, 6.4.1.8, & 6.8 *infra*), the "... priority areas for the transformation process" (South Africa 1995a: 5.1) do indicate discontinuous changes in organisational culture since they deal directly or indirectly with the pursuit and establishment of value systems that, from the perspective of reconstruction and development, seem foreign to the previous regime. It is evident that the transformation priorities are designed to "fundamentally reshape" the public service for its appointed role in the new dispensation in South Africa (South Africa 1995a: 1.2). By inference it would be necessary that public officials who are employed in the new public service, where reconstruction and development are emphasised and pursued, undergo attitudinal changes, changes in interpretive schemes, and transformations in logics of action (see 2.10.3; 3.6.1 & 3.6.2 *supra*; 6.6 *infra*).

The fact that the priority areas have been articulated at all indicates that these are the aspects regarded as important to address in order to bring about transformation. In other words, seen from the point of view of the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector*, achieving the goals articulated or implied in the priority areas will constitute transformation or attempts towards transformation (*cf.* 4.4 & 4.5 *supra*; Transforming Governments ...: Online). In light of such an interpretation, and in light of the relationship between organisational culture and transformation (see 4.10 *supra*), it seems logical to consider the priority areas from an organisational culture perspective in order to determine whether the DPISA understood its transformation task as including transformation of public service organisational culture (see 3.5.1 & 5.6 *supra*). Considering the priority areas from an organisational culture perspective suggests the following results and conclusions (6.4.1.1 to 6.4.1.8 *infra*).

6.4.1.1 Rationalisation and restructuring to ensure a unified, integrated and leaner public service.

Against the backdrop of the *Constitutional* imperative to create a unified, democratic public service, this priority area emphasises the value of unity and equality as opposed to apartheid values of segregation and inequality. The rationalisation aspect of this priority area in turn indicates the pursuit of a leaner, or smaller public service. However, taking into account the South African context which emphasises the need for development and improved service delivery, it also implies that more will need to be done with less. The challenge of limited government resources versus unlimited and increasing societal needs is one that most, if not all, governments face. (*cf.* 4.2 *supra*). In addition to the values of unity and equality, this priority area also stresses frugality, effectiveness and efficiency.

The new South African government has variously been criticised for failing to achieve the latter goals, and hence for failing to achieve the pursued value systems inherent in this stated priority (*Finansies & Tegniek* July 1995: 10; Pretoria News 27 March 1997:3). For example, while there were realisations that the public service needed to shrink, it evinced a growth of 0.3% in the last quarter of 1994 (*Beeld* 25 July 1995: 1b), *i.e.*, during the first part of the rationalisation process. Between September 1995 and September 1996 the number of public servants declined by approximately 90 000 (Marais 1997, *cf.* Greybe 1996:2). It has, however, been argued that many of the posts involved were merely posts that were budgeted for but never filled, and ultimately abolished (Marais 1997; South Africa 1996: 5). Since 1994 many goals have been set for making the public service smaller, but have met with much opposition, obstacles and contradictions, evidently continuing the tradition of African countries' public sectors growing after changes in governments (Mbaku 1997: 213, 214), a tradition that South Africa can ill afford. The growth in the South African public service could also be understood from the point of view of inevitability, given the inheritance of development backlogs. It should also be considered, as Friedman (1996: 19) argues, that a smaller public service does not guarantee increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

From an organisational culture point of view, what the pursuit of this priority area has achieved was to amalgamate disparate public services and their incumbents on a structural basis (see 5.5 *supra*). It has been pointed out, however, that successful transformation that takes into account the need for change of organisational culture will not focus on structural adjustments and modification of institutional mechanisms only, but on the transformation of values and basic assumptions as well. Serious attention to changes of basic assumptions become all the more important when taking into account the constitutional equality in the new public service over against the ethnic heterogeneity and the past history of South African society the inherited public service and attendant suspicions among public officials (see 6.2.3 (a), (b), & (c)). Due to the disparate basic assumptions among public officials, based on differing values, a high degree of behaviour variability (5.5 *supra*) can be expected. As indicated (5.5 *supra*), for significant reduction in behaviour variability to be achieved, it is imperative that both cultural and structural aspects be addressed simultaneously. Thornhill (1994: 54) also emphasises the need for the complicated change of values and basic assumptions; viz., organisational culture, as opposed to the mere amalgamation, restructuring of posts and renaming of government departments.

It needs to be emphasised that the latter does not imply that the *DP*SA as main driver of the transformation process, along with the other transformation partners placed all hope on this priority area in order to achieve the envisaged transformed public service. It is important to take into account their execution of all the priority areas at the very least. What is pointed out here is that what has been executed in terms of the priority area under consideration does not provide much evidence of awareness of the organisational culture perspective and the importance of addressing organisational culture aspects more specifically along with the needed structural aspects.

6.4.1.2 Institution building and management to promote greater accountability and organisational and managerial effectiveness.

This transformation priority implies a change in management philosophy in the public service that would be focussed more on the achievement of tasks and the meeting of real public needs. It demands a devolution and decentralisation of managerial responsibility and accountability, and more direct participation by all parties. All of the latter raises greater demands of intensive management training throughout the ranks of public officials, new and old.

The cited concerns also imply a change in value systems, which inculcate a belief in personal responsibility rather than corporate responsibility. It also requires that public officials become more *other regarding* in an inclusive rather than exclusive manner; serving the real needs of the public; irrespective of ethnicity, gender or other traits traditionally earmarked for discrimination by the erstwhile government and public service. The need for the inculcation of the latter value system, or more accurately, interpretive scheme, becomes clearer in light of the development priorities as articulated in the *RDP*.

In order to achieve accountability and managerial effectiveness, devolution of powers to Ministers and Heads of Departments was made possible by the *Public Service Laws Amendment Act* of 1997 (South Africa 2000: 2.4; South Africa 1998:3.4.3). The significance of the latter Act for the priority here considered is the fact that it "... establishes a line of executive authority to the political heads of departments, viz. the Ministers and MEC's with original powers over matters such as internal organisation, staff appointments, promotion and other career incidents of public servants" (South Africa 1998: 3.3.1; Skweyiya cited in Hartley 1996:23).

Considering the current priority, Minister Skweyiya complained of the reluctance of the "majority of directors general" to promote participation and greater accountability in their departments (cited in Hartley 1997: 2). In this regard Hartley (1997a: 18) concludes that it was delusional to think of the officials from the previous public service as being particularly efficient or capable of divorcing themselves from

ideological goals of apartheid. In addition to the latter there existed a dire need for management training in the public service due to, among other factors, "... backlogs of the past, challenges posed by restructuring, affirmative action, new appointees and *RDP* requirements" (Nkomo 1995: 20, 21), which might imply an inability to promote participation and accountability.

In terms of the delegation of powers, most of the provinces complained that the communication that they received from the *DPSA* in this regard was often not clear, and hence rendered them incapable of performing the tasks expected of them (South Africa 2000: 2.6.2). Role ambiguity seems to exist particularly in regard to Directors-General at provincial level, with the result that these incumbents evidently do not provide, or are not capable to provide, the leadership required, for effective transformation (South Africa 1997b: 4.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2) consequently, insufficient progress has been made with the transformation process (South Africa 1997b: 4.1.11) in relation to institution building, and organisational management and effectiveness.

Reports also indicate a frustration on the part of public servants at provincial level in particular with regard to accountability. Individual public servants are evidently not held accountable for the way they spend public money, nor for work performance. "There is no culture of accountability for individual actions. Public servants throughout the country are frustrated that accountability for performance is not enforced" (South Africa 1997b: 3.3).

The preceding elaboration indicates the problems experienced with regard to transformation, and hence the challenges for the change in organisational culture. A primary requirement for successful organisational culture change is the presence of credible, committed, informed, visionary leadership (see 3.5.1.1 & 3.5.1.2 *supra*; Cooper *et al* 1998: 257, 258; see 3.5.3 *supra*; *cf.* Skweyiya 1998:4). The indication from the above is that such leadership is not always available; hence the problems in the change process resulting in public service transformation being hampered to a large extent.

6.4.1.3 Representativeness and affirmative action.

The organisational culture implications in this transformation priority are many, contentious and far reaching, particularly when considered against the backdrop of an apartheid public service. Table 6.2 below reflects the profile of the management echelon (Director to Director-General) of the erstwhile South African public service by population group and gender in relation to national population in 1994. It is clear that the management echelon of the public service was not representative of the South African society, and that it was White male dominated (94%; *cf.* Table 6.1 *supra*).

Table 6.2: Profile of the senior management echelon of the former South African public service by population group and gender in 1994 (excluding self-governing and TBVC states).

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female
% of management echelon	2.0	1.0	3.0	94.0	95.0	5.0
National population (CSS estimate)	76.0	8.0	3.0	13.0	49.0	51.0

(Source: Presidential Review Commission's Report, 1998: Online)

Table 6.3 reflects the profile of the management echelon of the former South African public service, national departments, by population groups and gender, including the whole public sector.

The statistics of table 6.3 reflect the following South African public service verities, *circa* 1994:

- i. White males were grossly over-represented in the public service, particularly in the top management echelons.
- ii. Females, particularly Black females (African, Coloured, and Indian), were generally under-represented in the management echelons.
- iii. Inequalities between the genders and population groups were less severe at the lower levels when considered in the light of population representivity.

Table 6.3: Profile of the management echelon of the former South African public service (national departments) by population group and gender in 1994.

	African		Coloured		Indian		White	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
% of management level	10	0.6	1.5	NIL	1	0.06	85	2
% at middle management level (approx.)	7		41		5		48	
% at lower levels	10		50		4		36	

(Source: Developed from Skweyiya 1994)

Considering the latter statistical reflection in light of *Constitutional* imperatives of establishing a public service representative of the South African population, it would be essential to transform the public service into one that is broadly representative of the population. This is particularly important in light of the fact that the public service is regarded as the South African government's "most important instrument" in its efforts to "normalize society." (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995: 218).

It should be noted that representativeness does not only relate to race or ethnicity, but also to gender and disability. The *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* states that "(t)he main target groups for affirmative action programmes will be

Black people, women and people with disabilities" (South Africa 1995a: 10.3; cf. South Africa 1996: 9(3)).

The priority of "... representativeness and affirmative action" clearly requires that the imbalances in the composition of the public service be addressed urgently in order to promote an efficient public administration broadly representative of the South African community (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b)). The 1996 *Constitution* (Act 108 of 1996) regards it as a basic value of South African public administration to be "... broadly representative of the South African people", and clearly implicates the use of affirmative action to achieve this goal (South Africa 1996: 195(1)(i); cf. 5.9 *supra*). In this regard the equality clause in the Bill of Rights specifies that: "(t)o promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken" (South Africa 1996: 9 (2); cf. Skweyiya 1994a). Shaw (1997: Interview) is of the opinion that the affirmative action drive is perhaps the most important attempt at addressing organisational culture change in the public service.

The contentious nature of representativeness and affirmative action becomes clear in light of the *transplacement* negotiations of the early 1990's (see 5.2.2.2), and the Constitutional protection of categories of public servants employed in the former public service (South Africa 1993: Section 236; cf. South Africa 1997a: 6, 72, 108-110), as opposed to the need for redress that exists in the public service of the new South Africa, as well as the broader South African society (cf. South Africa 1995a: 10.3, 10.4; Reddy & Choudree 1996: 25-40). The matter is exacerbated by the threats that particularly White public officials feared the new public servants would bring (see 6.2 iii *supra*; cf. Wessels & Viljoen 1992:198-217; Wessels 1994:193-202).

The strong support as well as opposition that the pursuit of affirmative action has received is legendary, not only in South Africa, but also internationally. Two diametrically opposed views are, for example, advocated in Andrews (1992: 34-43), who sees the introduction of affirmative action as a lowering of standards of efficiency, and Naidoo (1995: 18-21) who regards it as a necessary means of addressing the imbalances brought about by the "affirmative action" that resulted

from apartheid policies through “retroactive advancement” (cf. Vil-Nkomo 1995:136-140).

The *Green Paper on a Conceptual Framework for Affirmative Action and the Management of Diversity in the Public Service* (South Africa 1997c), taken along with the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* (South Africa 1995a) and the Constitutional imperatives for representativity and transformation of the South African public service and broader society, solicited mixed responses, particularly during 1997 (cf. Graneli 1997: 3; Swart 1997: 8). During 1995, the Auditor-General also launched direct attacks on what he saw as irresponsible application of affirmative action policies (*Finansies & Tegnies*, April 1995: 9; *Pretoria News*, August 1995:1). The Minister for the Public Service and Administration regarded his attacks as “... unfounded, destructive, and uncalled for, especially at a time when most of our efforts should be directed towards motivating, encouraging and supporting our public servants in their daunting task of building an effective Public Service of delivering the RDP”. He saw the Auditor-General’s remarks as specifically directed against the affirmative action programme, and hence as revealing of his stance against a Constitutional imperative that, in the light of the discrimination of the apartheid public service, was unavoidable (Skweyiya 1995).

The reactions could be interpreted and understood from various vantage points, e.g., threat as opposed to opportunity, and containment as opposed to change. What needs to be highlighted here is the potential that representativity and affirmative action have for changing the culture of an organisation, and for transforming the interpretive schemes of incumbents due to exposure to new ways of thinking and doing, and challenges it poses to established attitudes and belief systems. Admittedly, affirmative action as a means of addressing the constitutional imperative of broad representativity invariably brings about a public service that employs diversities, with attendant potential problems.

It has been noted at 3.8 *supra* that such problems need to be addressed urgently and from a basis of knowledge. Adler (1983: 494-496) and Feldman (1976: 19-23), in support of the professional-managerial multicultural approach, suggest that it is necessary to recognise diversities and to strive for a multicultural approach in

addressing organisational culture change. Such an approach recognises and maximises the contributions of all sub-cultures to the goals of the public service, inculcating new overarching values and basic assumptions. Adopting such an approach necessitates the conscious establishment and functioning of an informed maternal holding culture that informs of the need for adopting new public service values, what the values are, and how to achieve and apply them with a view to best serve the public in a unified manner. In other words, the development of a common public service culture void of parochialism, but that allows for the application of unique functional expertise within the framework of this common culture. Where that common culture or shared framework is missing, a fundamental basis for collective action is lost (*cf.* 3.5.3 *supra*, Rosell 1999: 46).

The Provincial Review Commission found that where departments reflected low representativity due to not applying affirmative action strategies, there also existed a culture of containment, hence low support for any transformation in pursuit of the goals and value systems of the new government. Concomitantly, where transformational leadership was highly developed, and where transformation was approached holistically, *i.e.*, following the transformation priorities set out in *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* in their entirety and concurrently, culture transformation also seemed more evident (South Africa 1998: 4.2.1, 4.2.2).

Approaching transformation holistically is evidently a function of the comprehension of the complexity of transformation (South Africa 1998: 4.2.1); *i.e.*, not understanding what transformation entails would result in limited transformation and often, failed transformation. The 1996/7 *Annual Report of the Gauteng Provincial Service Commission* indicates that during the period under review (1996/7: 15) an absence of a "holistic provincial policy" was the cause of most departments in the province lacking uniform and acceptable programmes with which to achieve the constitutional goal of broad representivity, and enhance effective and efficient transformation. This problem may be linked to the problem of a lack of consultation, liaison and coordination with the various transformation partners. It is evident that the provinces experienced a lack of effective communication with regards to the implementation of policies (*cf.* 6.10 *infra*). A basic requirement of successful transformation and also

organisational culture change is the imperative of effective, efficient, and constant communication and guidance from the change leaders and culture carriers (see 3.5.3, 4.9.2 & 4.10 *supra*). Simply providing policies that reflect transformation ideals without providing information with regards to guidelines for achievement adds to the frustration of the policy implementers (see South Africa 1997b: 3.1, 3.7, 4.2.2, 4.3.4; Gauteng Provincial Service 1996/7: 15).

Representivity that results from affirmative action or otherwise does not count for much if it stands as an end in itself. As Adler (1983: 495) infers, such representivity may still allow for the domination of one group over another if not strategically managed (see 3.8.1.1 & 3.8.1.1.1 *supra*). Given the South African context, representivity must have as primary aim improved service delivery characterised by inclusivity and a development orientation (South Africa 1994a; Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995:218-220; Skweyiya 1994a); an orientation evidently not accorded a high priority in the former public service (see 5.4 *supra*). The organisational culture perspective here, too, requires increased management capacity, coordination and effective communication (see 3.5.1.1 & 5.8 *supra*). In this regard the *DPSA* has launched a number of programmes in an effort to identify the obstacles to the implementation of affirmative action policies (South Africa 1997c: 5.3). These initiatives included the development of departmental policies and programmes for affirmative action redress, promotion of representativeness, and dialogue with the *Directorate: Affirmative Action Programmes and Information* housed in the *DPSA* (South Africa 1997c: 5.3.1-5.3.4). These programmes, however, evidently focussed more on meeting affirmative action time-frames and targets spelled out in the *White Paper on the transformation of the Public Service* (1995a: 10.6)¹ rather than the important organisational culture aspect of addressing the conflicts that are likely to come about due to changes in the employee profile as pointed out above (Adler 1983: 494-496; *cf.* 3.8.1.3 *supra*).

6.4.1.4 Transforming service delivery to meet basic needs and redress past imbalances.

As is evident from the previous priority, this transformation priority is based upon the development needs of the South African society. The public service as the most important implement of government is clearly the vehicle through which these needs can be addressed. The primary orientation in the previous public service, executing apartheid policy, was to focus on the needs of the White population while the majority of the countries' Black population experienced low, unsatisfactory and discriminatory services (*cf.* South Africa 1994: 1.2; 5.4 *supra*). Clearly, this priority area would imply, among other changes, the need for a change in attitude among all public officials; implying the need for a transformation – a change of interpretive schemes from discrimination to integration, from inequality to equality. Such a change in interpretive schemes will cause officials to understand the needs of the total society against the background of development and will hopefully constrain them to operate accordingly.

Based upon the requirements implied in the reconstruction and development needs of the South African society, this priority area makes cooperation between government, public service and the South African community an imperative value to pursue (see South Africa 1994: 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 1.3.6, and 1.3.7; South Africa 1995a: 11.3; 11.5).

The principles that would guide optimal service delivery as a transformation goal would be (Skweyiya & Vil-Nkomo 1995: 219; *cf.* South Africa 1993: 11):

- i. The *subsidiarity* principle, that postulates that "... a government programme or function must not be assigned to a higher level of government, if it can be dealt with satisfactorily at a lower one"; and
- ii. The *empowerment* principle, which relates to the non-interference of higher authorities in cases where decision-making or/and execution authority have been assigned to a government authority at a lower sphere of the government hierarchy.

The execution of this transformation priority was enabled by various and policies such as the various versions of the *RDP* (see South Africa 1994: 0.4), the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* (South Africa 1995a), and the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper, South Africa 1997d)*. In the *Batho Pele White Paper*, for example, the *DPSA* acknowledges its responsibility for public service transformation policy, including the *White Paper*, and undertakes to provide guidelines to provincial and national departments with regards to bringing the *Batho Pele* principles (South Africa 1997d: 3, 4.1-4.8) to fruition (South Africa 1997d: 10). It pledges that:

“(t)he DPSA will provide leadership and expertise on an ongoing basis to guide and support national and provincial departments’ implementation programmes, and to assist in capacity building.” (South Africa 1997d: 10).

Enabling legislation and policies, however, do not constitute actual improved service delivery. This implies that the organisational culture of departments should become such that improved, efficient, non-discriminatory service delivery becomes a basic assumption premised upon the pursuit of the value systems upon which the enabling legislation and policy is based.

A measure of the successes of transformation of service delivery is how the receivers of government services experience and perceive the services, or lack thereof. Various surveys done by the *Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)* in this regard indicated that, although there still exists a high level of satisfaction toward government, there nevertheless seemed to have been a growing dissatisfaction in the period 1995 to 1997. The survey findings indicate that while the majority of South Africans (58%) are still positive about government, the figures were higher for February 1996 (64%) and even higher during February 1995 (67%). The gradual decline in South African’s positive perceptions of government may provide an indication of overall expectations and experience of service delivery (*HSRC 1997*) over the period concerned. If this decline is an implication of such, then it is evident that the culture of service delivery needs urgent attention.

6.4.1.5 Democratisation of the state.

“Democratisation of the state” as a priority area for transformation also requires radical, discontinuous transformation from the previous government and public service. It obviously relates to inclusiveness, participation, equality, and other values inherent in democracy. Relating to transformation in the public service, however, this priority area relates to the development of a public service that is accountable in terms of how it operates, its relationships towards the publics it serves, transparency, consultation and participation – all value premises advocated by the *RDP*, the *Constitutions* (South Africa 1993, 1996), the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* (South Africa 1997d), and other transformation policies and Acts. The development and implementation of the *Public Service Code of Conduct* (South Africa 1997k) also contributes towards the end of the democratisation of the public service and the state, requiring the appreciation of the right of the public to information, accountability, and representative personal conduct.

The democratisation of the public service assumes that the public service and incumbent public officials will espouse an attitude that is *other regarding*, and that this will become a basic assumption characteristic of all that is done in the public service (see 6.4.1.8 *infra*). This priority area serves as premise for the other priority areas, particularly when seen in light of the *Constitutional* imperative of unbiased and impartial service to all members of the South African public (South Africa 1993: 212(b); South Africa 1996: 195 (1)(d), (e), (f), (g), (i)). As elaborated at 6.8 *infra*, democracy provides the basis for a common vision for the public service. Primarily then, the transformation of the public service has as ideal the establishing of an organisational culture in the public service that fulfil or aspire towards the tenets of democracy. The *DPSA*, in driving the implementation of this priority area, specifically articulated in the 1996 *Constitution* (South Africa 1996: 195), should aspire towards the instilling of core values such as accountability, transparency, accessibility and responsibility, equal opportunity, recognition of human dignity, and the promotion of social welfare (see 6.8 *infra*).

The inclusiveness that is to result from democratising the state and public service served as a threat in the minds of many public officials of the previous order

(Wessels & Viljoen 1992: 198-217; Wessels 1994: 195-199; South Africa 1997f: 72). Given the transformation and democratisation realities of governments and public services globally, this priority should serve as a challenge towards improvement rather than be seen from a parochial vantage point. As Wiechers (1993: 256) has it, "... the ... laborious negotiations and reconstruction of the South African society and government should not be overwhelmed by negative fears and worries over lost or threatened power, but must be driven by idealism of a healthy democratic value system" (cf. 6.5 & 6.8 *infra*).

6.4.1.6 Human resource development.

A major challenge that the new public service faces is the issue of available capacity. Each of the other priority areas is to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon the availability and optimal employment of South Africa's human resources, which requires urgent attention primarily due to skewed development in the past.

A key element in human resource development is the aspect of public service training and education (South Africa 1995a: 13.2, Levitz 1995: 6, 7; Nkomo 1995: 20, 21). While it is important to prepare skilled and competent public officials for the transformed public service, the current acute need is also for building capacity of those who deal directly with transformation; viz., political office bearers and the managerial personnel. This thesis contends that one important reason for the limited success of transformation and for change in organisational culture is the lack of understanding of the phenomena mentioned. Organisational culture in particular is not well understood, and is often left to transform "naturally" during the process of guiding "other" transformation priorities. The *Presidential Review Commission* found this trend to be predominant in most provincial departments; and hence pointed out the need for capacity building on this front (South Africa 1998: 4.2.1).

The *South African Management and Development Institute* (SAMDI) that replaced the erstwhile *Public Sector Training Institute* was established in order to address the human resource needs of the public service. Initially it functioned under the auspices of the Public Service Commission, but later it was proclaimed a *Schedule 2*

organisation with a view to functioning autonomously, but within the broad mandate of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration (South Africa 1997d: 38, 39), ostensibly to pursue particularly the transformation agenda as set out in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector*. Doubt has been cast on the role of *SAMDI* as provider of in-service and management training (South Africa 1998: 4.6.5). It has been suggested that the institute play a coordinating role in training and education rather than as a direct provider (South Africa 1998: 4.6.5; cf. South Africa 1995a: 13.6).

The initiative taken by the *DPSA* in the establishment of a *Senior Management Service (SMS)* (Fraser-Moleketi 2000; Policy Statement on ...: Online; cf. Fraser-Moleketi 1999), which purports to be a programme of government to professionalise the senior management echelon (*i.e.*, levels from Director upwards) of government represents a necessary step in the direction of addressing the need for capacity building in relation to human resource development. The *SMS* will be launched on 1 January 2001, and evidently, its establishment and further development will be undertaken in consultation with tertiary institutions and other parties who have a vested interest in the promotion of a professional senior management echelon in the public service (Fraser-Moleketi 2000).

A perusal of official documents and reports; e.g. the *Presidential Review Report* (South Africa 1998:4.2.3, 4.2.4), and the *Provincial Review Report* (South Africa 1997b: 4.3.2, 4.3.9), suggests that there remains a dire need for human resource development and training. During 1995 the Auditor-General reported that the public service was on the verge of a collapse due to, among other things, the dearth in skills and the "exodus of experienced officials" (*Finansies & Tegniek* April 1995: 9).

Another aspect that deals directly with the issue of organisational culture change is the view that the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* has *vis-à-vis* human resource management and development. It states that "(h)istorically human resource issues in the South African public service have been regarded as administrative or technical matters rather than the strategic management concerns that can, if properly managed, make a major contribution to the achievement of socio-economic goals" (South Africa 1995a: chapter 9). If this is so, than the *DPSA's*

view certainly represents a radical change in organisational culture since the organisational culture perspective emphasises the need for recognising the role of employees as going beyond mere administration or technical matters (*cf.* 2.2.1.7 *supra*). As Westley (1990:292, 293) understands it, "(t)he logic of change and innovation at the organizational level must be matched by a logic of change at the level of personality. New images of modal personality must accompany *both* transfer mechanisms *and* new images of the goal culture." This logic of change can be instilled through provision of relevant training. As GAO (USA) researches have found, the provision of training that promotes the development of skills related to the desired values and beliefs is a very important aspect, in addition to management commitment, in enabling successful organisational culture change (see 3.8.3 *supra*, *cf.* Hanekom 1995: 195-208; Wessels 2000: 311-324). The focus that the *DPSA* places on relevant training can therefore contribute largely towards the required organisational culture change if it is approached deliberately with such change in mind (see 3.5.1.1 *infra*).

6.4.1.7 Employment conditions and labour relations.

The need for prioritising employment conditions and labour relations can only be understood against the background of the inequities that existed in the apartheid public service. The job reservation strategies of the previous government have been alluded to in chapter five (5.2.1 & 5.4 *supra*), and the statistical realities are cited and illustrated at 6.2, iii & 6.4.1.2 *supra*.

It is against this background that it is necessary to transform employment conditions and labour relations. Aspects that received urgent attention under this priority are matters of salary discrimination, gender and disability discrimination, career pathing, and the improvement of labour relations and other employment conditions. These are done in recognition that the development of an efficient, productive, honest and well-motivated public service committed to a professional service ethos and work ethic is predicated upon equitable and non-discriminatory salary and employment conditions (South Africa 1995:14.1-14.3).

This priority area has also resulted in various enactments, such as the *Labour Relations Act* and the *White Paper on New Employment Policy for the Public Service*. Given various expectations and fears, however, this priority area still remains very sensitive and volatile.

During the Singaporean transformation process (Quah 1996: 294-312) the priority of employment conditions and labour relations were dealt with by equalising employment conditions through the removal of benefits of public servants inherited from the previous government and at the same time bringing the salaries of new incumbents on par, according to scale, with the reduced packages of older incumbents, and placing a moratorium on future salary increases until the Singaporean economy had recovered. The process of recovery took approximately fifteen years. Dealing with the issues in this fashion achieved a number of results, of which the following are important within the context of this thesis:

- i. It made it clear to the old and new public officials that a new government was in charge, and that the latter was committed to lead the transformation by any means necessary.
- ii. That there was a commitment to transform the Singaporean public service as well as the economy simultaneously, given the reciprocal relationship between the two environments.
- iii. It focussed on the change of attitudes among both old and new incumbents, establishing a common vision and commanding endorsement and commitment to the vision.

In regard to labour relations, the Presidential Review Commission found that there needed to be more streamlining and coordination between the functions of the *DPSSA* and the Department of Labour since there seem to be a working at cross-purposes between the two departments. They suggested that the Department of Labour should serve as advisor to the *DPSSA* regarding labour matters and the transformation of the latter (South Africa. 1998: Appendix 3). The Presidential Review Commission also indicated that the relationship between the *DPSSA* as main public service transformation driver and the Counsel for South African Trade Unions (COSATU) needed to be changed radically. The Commission avers that "(w)e have

a new government, but old business and old labour attitudes. Should labour attitudes not cooperate more with the new dispensation?" (South Africa 1998: Appendix 3). This call for attitudinal change and improved extra-governmental relations with COSATU, as well as improved inter-governmental relations with the Department of Labour would aid in the development of better coordination and communication between the main transformation driver and the other transformation partners, improving the adoption of new value systems that can bring about the required organisational culture change in the public service.

6.4.1.8 Promotion of a professional service ethos.

An essential element to reconstruction and development, and hence to the whole transformation process is the presence of a motivated civil service with a strong morale and sense of mission (South Africa 1995a: chapter 15). It is in this light that a *Public Service Code of Conduct* has been developed by the Public Service Commission and eventually published and promoted in conjunction with the Minister of the Public Service and Administration in 1997 (Greybe 1997: 2; cf. South Africa 1996: 196(4)(a); South Africa 1997k: 34, 35; Skweyiya 1997a). The object of the code was primarily to promote exemplary conduct among public officials, but also to address the increasing incidence of corruption and unethical conduct in the public service (Greybe 1997: 2; Mangena 1997: 8; Kotzé 1996: 2).

The need for a professional service ethos in a transformed public service becomes evident in light of the aims of the *RDP*, and other transformation priorities. Transformation also requires that the new public service be different from the previous one; one that has been discredited on the grounds of state sponsored indiscretions.

An important aim in the promotion of a professional service ethos is also to establish a uniform understanding between public officials, and between public officials and politicians of what is expected of them.

"If there is disparity between the outlook of the bureaucracy and of the political leadership, then the political leadership will reshape the bureaucracy into a mirror image of themselves. An honest and efficient political leadership invariably nurtures a bureaucracy of able and dedicated civil servants. Conversely, a political leadership of corrupt, ignorant and inapt men will in no time transform the bureaucracy into an administrative replica of itself. The end result is a partnership of a progressively rebellious population" (Rajaratnam cited in Quah 1996: 306, 307).

In light of the latter citation it is evident that political leaders must be committed to minimizing and even eradicating political and administrative corruption. Again this can be related to the goals of reconstruction of development. Corruption and unethical conduct entails the wastage of scarce resources on bribes and self-enrichment, and not on development programmes. The Provincial Review Commission has also found that where unethical conduct is left unchecked, it results in high levels of tension among staff, and can potentially give rise to labour disputes (South Africa 1997b: 4.2.1). Consider, for example, the case of White public officials who were found abusing vehicles of the Department of Welfare at Newgate House, Johannesburg. Black workers who complained about the abuse were evidently told to exercise patience and tolerance until the civil service regulations were reviewed and changed. The latter officials felt discriminated against and threatened labour action (Mlambo 1997: 2).

Transforming the South African society, in light of the current priority, also implies that the public service is transformed and free of corruption, or at least free of corruption with impunity; an issue intensely debated currently, given the ostensible "... rewarding" of high ranking officials who have been found guilty of corruption and or ethical misconduct (Jurgens 2000:13; Clapper 2000:391, note 7).

Promoting a professional public service ethos links directly to the promotion of values and hence to a change of organisational culture in the public sector.

The explication and assessment of the eight transformation priorities are obviously done within the constraints of a transformation process that has been running over a

very short period of time. The high ambition of anticipating positive results over a short term, given the gravity of the processes, structures, cultures, and ideologies, expectations, and fears involved is admittedly unrealistic. In light of the latter, the transformation achievements in terms of the measure of affirmative action, service conditions and other human resource aspects, policy formulation, and other transformation priorities treated above over so short a period are to be lauded. This problem could, however, be related to the definition of transformation which assumes a very short time span (see 4.5.1 *supra*). As pointed out (4.9 *supra*), genuine transformation which entails discontinuous change and hence transformation of organisational culture and all that the latter entails, is a process that requires much time.

Some aspects of the South Africa public service transformation that could not be dealt with directly or sufficiently under the *priority* section (6.4 *supra*) will now be attended to. These aspects are, among others, the direction of transformation, the need for attitude transformation, and the establishment of a common vision. The focus still remains the role of the *DPSA* in relation to transformation of the organisational culture of the public service.

6.5 Direction of transformation - From apartheid public service to developmental, democratic public service

Since transformation implies the progress from one state of affairs, normally deemed unsatisfactory, to another state of affairs that promises to be better than the previous, attention will now be turned to what the characteristics of the previous public service were, and what the envisaged characteristics of the new public service are. This exercise will provide deeper insight into the need for transformation of the South African public service. These aspects have been treated in various sections of this thesis; hence, the following list represents an effort at consolidation.

- i. The transformation of the South African public service was predicated upon the need for transformation of the inherited South African system of

government. The former South African governmental system, and hence the former public service was characterised by apartheid, segregation, and particularistic and exclusive service delivery (see 5.4 *supra*), as opposed to the envisaged democratic, unified, representative and inclusive, developmental service delivery of the new public service (see 4.5.1 *supra*, South Africa 1997a: 1-9; cf. Bellos 1994: 115-153).

- ii. The South African transformation and reform process evinces a transformation from a limited and fragmented democratic system to a fully democratised and re-integrated state (Thornhill 1994:53; cf. South Africa 1997a: 1-9).
- iii. The public service of the previous government further evinced the following principle features (South Africa 1998a :Online; South Africa 1995a: 3.1.1, see 5.6 *supra*):
 - a. Rigid, racial and ethnic segregation;
 - b. Fragmentation, duplication and waste;
 - c. Poor and outdated management practices;
 - d. A regulatory bureaucratic culture;
 - e. Lack of accountability and transparency;
 - f. Poorly paid and demotivated staff;
 - g. Conflictual labour relations.

As opposed to the above features, the new public service is envisaged as being characterised by the following features (South Africa 1997d: 3.11; South Africa 1995a: chapter 9; South Africa 1993: 212 (b), (c); Schedule 4, Principle XXX):

- a. Commitment to inclusive service delivery, based on reconstruction and development needs;
- b. National reconciliation;
- c. Democratisation;
- d. Community empowerment;
- e. Accountability and transparency;
- f. New and relevant managerial systems based on participation and on the achievement of tasks and the meeting of needs rather than being governed by bureaucratic rules and regulations.

It is evident from the foregoing that there exist important differences between the public service of the previous government and the public service that the current government envisages will result from the current discontinuous transformation and reforms. The rationalisation process, however, has resulted in the integration and amalgamation of, on the one hand, eleven different public services, characterised by the apartheid features as listed above and, on the other hand, new public officials with very little experience in the type of public service that is the goal of, *inter alia*, the *RDP* and the 1993 and 1996 *Constitution*. Hence it can be expected that the public officials who remained in the public service after rationalisation, as well as the new public officials, are likely to find themselves challenged by new demands and expectations from political bodies, interest groups, and the general public. These challenges and expectations they have to address in a legal and organisational setting which is largely unfamiliar, and even diametrically opposed to what they may be used to, or prepared to support. In addition, as indicated at 6.2 *supra*, the public officials of the rationalised and transforming public service have to deal with peculiar personal and group psychological expectations and threats that they might find debilitating since it faces them with organisational cultures, interpretive schemes, and logics of action that they might find foreign, contrary to their expectations or their adopted cultures, and hence unacceptable.

6.6 Need for attitudinal change

The above relates directly to the aspects of value endorsement and value adoption or adaptation; hence the issue of attitudinal change. Thornhill (1994: 53) indicates that attitudinal change lies at the root of any reform or transformation, and adds that attitudinal change or transformation is the most difficult to achieve. Jones and Blunt (1993: 1742) concurs in stating that "... many organizational (transformation) efforts fail because their effects on the human subsystem are not properly managed".

The realisation and development of the organisational culture perspective focuses primarily on the need to recognise this human subsystem and how it relates to organisation processes (see 2.2.1.7 *supra*), including organisational transformation.

Within the context of the South African public service, Wessels (1994: 193-202) and Wessels and Viljoen (1992: 198-217), who have researched the attitudes of White public officials (see Wessels & Viljoen 1992: 200, 201) to the impending transformation of the public service, found supporting evidence that the human subsystem needs to be managed properly in order to deal with threats and perceived threats to job security and job future. Such an approach to management would directly impact upon attitudinal changes among public officials. Hugo and Stack (cited in Bellos 1994: 129) are of the opinion that an emphasis on the need to address the attitudes of White and Black public officials would be in the interest of reconciliation, and as a means of minimising areas of potential racial conflict. In this regard Whitfield (1993: 16) alerted to the capacity of "... the dying apartheid monster (with reference to the attitudes of many inherited public officials) to make the transition difficult". This capacity makes it imperative to address the aspect of attitudes, based on basic assumptions, which influence interpretive schemes and logics of action.

As indicated (6.4.1.7 supra), during the transformation of the Singaporean public service particular emphatic attention was given to attitudinal reforms among public officials of both the replaced colonial public service as well as new public officials (Quah 1996: 308, 309). The attitudinal reform efforts were designed to break the "... isolationist and anachronistic outlook" of the public officials because the new government recognised that it needed the support of both groups of public servants in order to implement its reform programmes successfully, but was also aware of the need to demonstrate to the civil servants that it was firmly in control before they would give their support to the new government.

In this regard Schröter and Röber (1997: 110) point out that when public officials' transformation readiness and adaptability to redefined administrative roles that result from regime change are assessed, it is not sufficient to simply focus on formal qualifications, knowledge of administrative procedures, and legal norms. "More important, it is their *administrative culture*² that deserves our attention." The latter is based upon their research findings regarding attitudinal changes among public officials in East and West Berlin during the transformation of the administrative

system of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). They concluded, "... for the stability and effective functioning of a given system, an *adequate administrative culture* is a necessary precondition" (1997: 110, emphasis supplied). This assumes that the drivers of the transformation process have specifically identified and steered towards a sufficiently articulated and communicated new administrative or organisational culture (see 4.9.1, *vi supra*).

The real challenge, therefore, is to enable adaptation to a new administrative culture, and to facilitate domestication of formal qualifications and administrative procedures within the new administrative culture. Stated differently – it is important to facilitate a process of attitudinal change that would result in a situation where values articulated in a specific environment is synonymous with the values espoused in that environment (*cf.* Muthien 1994). It is not clear how much effort had been exerted by the *DPSA* in directly addressing, enabling, and facilitating attitudinal transformation and adoption of new values among public officials, old and new. The perfunctory response to a direct question in this regard was that workshops on diversity management were being held and planned, and that legislation and policy developments are geared towards attitude reform (Singh 1998: Interview). The lack of concrete evidence, however, seems to indicate either a lack of attention to attitudinal reform, or a belief that legislation and policies will actually reform attitudes without any concerted additional interventions.

6.7 Establishing a maternal holding culture – *The DPSA, Ministers, and Directors-General.*

Public sector transformation requires increased managerial autonomy and responsibility whereby only broad policy frameworks are set nationally and all day-to-day executive functions are left to Ministers and heads of departments (Skweyiya 1996). The latter ministerial articulation seems to be based on the influence that Ministers and heads of departments or Directors-General exert on the policy-making processes by virtue of their decisions and non-decisions (Hanekom 1995: 60, 61, 63-67). Ministers and Directors-General may also be viewed as "culture carriers" since

they also transmit the culture and values of the organization to their charges (*cf.* Jabes & Zussman 1989: 99). The *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* concurs in stating that "... Directors-General will have a vital leadership role to play in translating the broad policy objectives, performance measures, targets and time frames set by the Government (and *DPSA* in particular) into meaningful and achievable strategies for departmental transformation at the national and provincial levels" (South Africa 1995b: 6.1.3; Singh Interview 1996; Vil-Nkomo Interview 1996).

This thesis argues that since the *DPSA* in conjunction with the Minister for the Public Service and Administration are tasked with the principal responsibility for overseeing, driving and co-ordinating the transformation process (South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1), they are regarded as the primary "culture carriers", in that they are required to transmit the culture and values of the new South African government as envisaged in the *RDP* and the *Constitutions* of 1993 and 1996. As such the *DPSA* and the Minister are tasked to establish a maternal holding culture, enabling and allowing the different departments as well as the provinces (see South Africa 1995a: 6.1.1, 6.1.3) to establish their own sub-cultures along the guidelines and time frames provided by the policy directives generated by the *DPSA* in conjunction with and by order of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration. These, of course, are to be developed in consultation and partnership with the other policy instruments and institutional mechanisms that are responsible for driving and implementing the transformation process (South Africa 1995a: 1.5; 6.1, 6.1.2; see 4.5.1.3 *supra*).

The members of the transformation unit at the *DPSA* also share this understanding of the relationship between the *DPSA* and the various Ministers and Departments, national and provincial. They concurred that since the "... culture of each department will be different" the unique circumstances of each will determine how they relate to the maternal holding culture as such (Singh 1996: Interview). The latter recognition is also reflected in the following citation:

"All policy matters relating to, inter alia, human resource practices, conditions of service, labour relations, organisation development and information technology will be placed with the Minister for the Public Service and Administration. On the other hand, all executive powers relating to career

incidents of public servants, organisational structures and post establishments of departments will be exercised by Ministers and their departments. This includes career incidents such as recruitment, advertising, selection, appointment, promotion, transfer, secondment, placement, retirement, discharge and misconduct and internal organisational functions such as organisational structures, creation of posts, abolition of posts and allocation and transfer functions. All these executive powers will be performed subject to the national policy in this regard as is to be laid down by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration” (Skweyiya 1996; emphasis supplied).

While the preceding citation primarily deals with “executive powers”, it should be noted that the exercise of such powers is not regarded by the *DPSA* as an end in itself. The aim of exercising these powers is in order to pursue and achieve the transformation priorities as set out in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* (South Africa 1995a: 5.1), and to accomplish the vision and mission that form the basis for transformation in South Africa. The ultimate goal is to, through the exercise of the executive powers, achieve transformation of the public service, and consequently of the organisational culture of the public service.

It is significant that the *DPSA* in its *1999/2000 Public Service Review Report* recognises that need to create “... frameworks regarding public service organisation and structuring that will allow for both appropriate uniformity and adequate differentiation at the same time” (South Africa 1999/2000 Online). This succinct statement recognises the need for the type of uniformity that enables the establishing of a sustainable organisational culture via a maternal holding culture that deliberately functions as custodian and driver of a new public service organisational culture. This recognition also indicates a heretofore lack of awareness of the maternal holding culture role, at least as articulated in this thesis.

The planned deliberate creation of a maternal holding culture framework may also be based upon the interpretation of the current incumbents of the *DPSA*, (see 4.9.1.8 *infra*), namely that:

“(T)ransformation has [before 1999/2000] been tackled in an ad hoc manner, without paying due regard to matters of sequencing, coordination and integration” (South Africa 1999/2000 On line).

This lack of coordination has been the experience of the national and provincial departments (South Africa 1997d: 3.1, 3.8; cf. 3.1), as well as of the Presidential Review Commission (1998: Appendix 3). A maternal holding culture that deliberately focuses on its role of interpreting, articulating and disseminating new values, enabling the adoption of the latter through extensive relevant communication, training, and exhibition by example of the main culture carriers, among other aspects (see 3.5.1.1, 3.5.1.2, & 3.5.1.2 *infra*), will emphasise the importance of coordination, close consultation and cooperation with sub-cultures and transformation partners.

The latter by no means require that all departments look alike or function as duplicates of a particular prescribed pattern. To paraphrase Rosell (1999: 46; see 3.5.3 *supra*):

It is not necessary for public service departments to function exactly in the same manner and according to the same patterns. The particular line functions and auxiliary functions do not and cannot allow for this to take place. Each department can and should maintain their own sub-cultures, so long as they endorse and espouse an overarching shared framework (read “maternal holding culture”). Where that shared framework is missing, a fundamental basis for collective action is lost.

Ideally, these sub-cultures should subscribe to and support the maternal holding culture without becoming duplicates of the maternal holding culture. In this regard, the *DPSA* is articulating the right, and hopefully rhetorical, question when it asks:

“Does the public service have to look the same in order to be considered a coherent whole? If differentiation is to be allowed, how far should it go? In what kinds of areas would it be appropriate?” (South Africa 1999/2000: 2.4)

Neglecting to deliberately establish or promote a maternal holding culture could be as a result of not properly understanding, or attending to the importance of, the organisational culture perspective (*cf.* 3.5.1 *supra*). The Secretary of the Portfolio Committee on the Public Service, Mr Robert Shaw (1997: Interview) opines that within the South Africa context, the organisational culture perspective is largely neglected because of the "... undue focus on structural transformation and development of transformation policies and legislation." By its own admission the *DPSA* emphasised the development of policies with a view to enabling the smooth transformation of the public service (South Africa 1997c: chapter 4, 2.4; Kekana 1998: Interview), referring to the transformation events over the period 1994 to 1998/9 as "... the initial transformation steps" (South Africa 1999/2000: 2.6). Presumably now that required basic enabling policies and legislation are in place, attention will more specifically be turned to the execution and implementation of these policies and Acts, particularly with regards to the transmitting of the values articulated in it in order to change the existing public service organisational culture and to establish the new organisational culture required by public service transformation.

Understanding the latter invariably leads to the need to establish a maternal holding culture. The position and functions of the *DPSA*, e.g. that it constitutes the main driver of the transformation process, implies that the establishment of such a maternal holding culture would fall within its purview. In addition, the manner in which particularly the provincial departments relate to the *DPSA* (South Africa 1997b) indicates their expectation that the *DPSA* would assume this responsibility. As indicated above, the *DPSA* evidently also recognises the need for playing such a role.

The departments, national and provincial, experience a flood of policy imperatives in the form of documents, but experience a lack of capacity to implement the policies since methods and procedures of implementation and capacity building have evidently been neglected by the *DPSA* (South Africa 1997b: 3.1; Shaw 1997: Interview). The flow of policy information from the *DPSA* and the content and expectations contained in these policy documents imply that the *DPSA* before the changing of Ministers and Directors-General comprehended its role as primary

culture carrier, even if only partially. However, the neglect of providing procedures and capacity building opportunities to enable departments to execute policy requirements and perform their duties as unique sub-cultures (South Africa 1997b: 3.1; Shaw 1997: Interview), point to a limited understanding of this important responsibility. New developments cited above seem to point an increase in the latter understanding.

6.8 Common vision for transformation of the public sector

As indicated above and elsewhere, the programme for reconstruction and development demands particularly a change in the public sector in order to transform society (see South Africa 1995: Chapter 5). Skweyiya and Vil-Nkomo (1995: 218) regard the public service as "... the Government's most important instrument" in the process of transforming South African society to normality, and in cautioning that the public service first has to be reorientated in order to "... attain the objectives of our programme for reconstruction and development" (South Africa 1995a: 2.18; Singh 1996: Interview). Marais (cited in Mittner 1994:11) points out that using the public service as an instrument to attain government goals and ideals is a legitimate exercise with precedents to boot. He avers: "(w)hen you consider it from a historical perspective, the public service has always been utilised as an instrument by the ruling party of the country. The ANC will not be extraordinary" (translated from Afrikaans).

Since democracy has been earmarked as the ideological pursuit in the quest for an ideal South African government, public service, and society, the public service in a new South Africa can be expected to be employed to the ends of democracy. According to Wiechers (1993:253), the search for the necessary values for an ideal South African government, public service, and society; (for an ideal societal culture, interpretive schemes and logics of action) invariably points towards core concepts such as *accountability, transparency, accessibility, and responsibility, equal opportunity, recognition of human dignity and the promotion of social welfare*. These values, he argues, may ultimately be captured in one value, viz., *democracy*. He

further defines "democracy" from both an institutional and a functional point of view. *Institutionally* democracy means "... a state institution premised upon universal adult suffrage, division of state authority, ... and popular participation" (translated from Afrikaans). *Functionally* democracy refers to the "... exercise and application of state authority for the welfare of all" (translated from Afrikaans) (Wiechers 1993: 253).

The gravity of the Wiechers' contention comes to the fore at the consideration of the events in the South African context particularly during the nineties decade. From a national perspective it is evident that great strides have been made in pursuit of value changes from the exclusiveness of apartheid to a democratic inclusiveness along the lines that Wiechers contends for. For the most part, admittedly, the value systems were articulated in the form of specific normative precepts; e.g., the promulgation of a myriad of laws, including laws to replace discriminatory laws and to prohibit discriminatory practices, and pacts to promote tolerance, to enable social and economic growth (*cf.* Kekana 1997: Interview). There is, however, a lack of the practice of these new values, norms, and precepts. If the public service is to serve as the vehicle through which the South African society will be transformed, then these newly espoused values will need to be exhibited in practice there.

In relation to the establishment and standardisation of a basic democratic value system Wiechers points to the *Constitutional Principles* that resulted from the Multi-Party Negotiations (*cf.* 5.2.2.2 *supra*; Du Plessis & Corder 1994:7, 8). These principles (see South Africa 1993: Schedule 4) determine how both current and future constitutions in South Africa are to be crafted – not on the basis of political expediency, power grasping, or parochialism, but on the basis of consensual precepts and norms (Wiechers 1993: 255; South Africa 1993: 73; Kekana 1997). It can therefore be concluded that the Constitution and the Constitutional Principles are the *summum bonum* of the public service and the South African society.

It is significant to note that the *Constitutional Principles* are not capable of amendment under any circumstances (South Africa 1993: 74(1)). This indicates, at the very least, that the values articulated in these principles are intended to be immortal and inviolable. At the very least, they are intended to enjoy the support of the majority of South Africans.

What this means in relation to organisational culture transformation of the public service is that the *Constitution*, and particularly the *Constitutional Principles* can provide the basic value system for the South African Government, public service, and society – a rallying point around which a democratic majority can find direction for communal life.

In this regard it is significant to note that the transformation priorities as set out in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* may be related; to a greater or lesser degree, directly or by inference, to the *Constitutional Principles*. Table 6.4 represents an attempt to substantiate this observation.

Table 6.4: Public service transformation priorities relative to Constitutional Principles (Act 108 of 1993)

Transformation Priorities (South Africa 1995: 5.1)	Constitutional Principles (South Africa 1993: Schedule 4)
Rationalisation and restructuring to ensure a unified, integrated and leaner public service.	XIX, XX
Institution building and management to promote greater accountability and organisational and managerial effectiveness.	IV, VI, XI, XVI, XVIII – XXV, XXVII
Representativeness and affirmative action.	III, V, XI, XIII, XXX
Transforming service delivery to meet basic needs and redress past imbalances.	II, XX, XXIV, XXVI, XXX
The democratisation of the state.	I, II, V, VIII, XI - XVII
Human resource development.	XXX
Employment conditions and labour relations.	XXVIII, XXX, XXXI
The promotion of a professional service ethos.	VI, VII, X, XXIX

6.8.1 *Constitutional Principles* and transformation priorities

- i. The *Constitutional Principles* (see annexure 3) are prescriptions to which the current as well as future governments are required to adhere to.
- ii. The relatedness of the transformation priorities to the *Constitutional Principles* implies a commitment of the *DPSA*, as main drivers of public service transformation, to the Constitutional aims of a transformed public service that is "genuinely representative" (South Africa 1995a: 2.2(a)), impartial (South Africa 1993: 212(2)(b)), and dedicated to development and the eradication of the abuses of a past era (South Africa 1995).
- iii. The fact that most of the *Constitutional Principles* relate to two or more priorities alerts to the fact that the priorities as well as the *Constitutional Principles* are interrelated.
- iv. While human resources overtly relates to only one *Constitutional Principle*, it seems evident that the other priorities require a high degree of human resource development in order to come to its own. See 6.4.1.6 *supra*.
- v. The method through which the *Constitutional Principles* have been developed, *i.e.*, Multi-Party Negotiations (Corder & Du Plessis 1994: 7, 8), underlines the possibility of the *Constitutional Principles*, and hence the constitutions based on same, to serve as value premises worthy of the support of the majority of South Africans.
- vi. The principles upon which the other priorities are premised relate to, and support, the human resource development priority.
- vii. If, as contended above, the transformation priorities are, to a large degree, predicated upon the *Constitutional Principles*, then the transformation priorities do represent the real means towards a transformed South African public service; the value premises upon which a new organisational culture may be built. The transformation premises, then, could serve, and are intended to serve as, the articulation of the common vision for a transformed public service, and by extension, a common vision of what South African society is to become.

6.9 Current understanding of the organisational culture perspective

The challenges that the transformation of organisational culture poses have been variously dealt with throughout this thesis. The following aspects, therefore, summarises the salient challenges, referring to relevant sections in parentheses.

- i. The fact that organisational culture exists at different levels (see 2.8 & 2.10 *supra*)
- ii. That organisational culture has deep historical roots (see 2.2.1.7 & 2.6 *supra*).
- iii. That it is directly connected with power distribution in an organisation (see 2.11 & 3.5.3 *supra*).
- iv. That it is interdependent on people, priorities, structure and systems (see 2.9 & 3.6 *supra*).
- v. That organisational culture change is taken for granted as something that occurs automatically (3.5.1 & 4.10 *supra*).
- vi. That many managers have a very limited understanding of the organisational culture perspective (see 3.5.1.1 *supra*).

Considering the priority areas for transformation as per the *DPSA* and the relationship between transformation and organisational culture (4.10 & 6.4 *supra*), the role of management in understanding and managing organisational culture transformation should not be underestimated (see 3.5.1.1 *supra*). It has been indicated that surmounting the challenge of being aware of, and properly understanding and managing organisational culture will also address the other challenges to a large degree, considering the pivotal role of managers as culture carriers and change agents.

While the transformation process is inextricably linked to the change of organisational culture, it seems evident that this is for the most part not understood or considered during transformation of the public sector. During discussions with representatives of the transformation unit in the *DPSA* (Singh 1996: Interview), responses to the request to explain the organisational culture of the *DPSA* as it relates to the other national departments were generally skirted (see annexure 2). It was also supposed that organisational culture would automatically change when new

legislation and policy pertaining to Human Resource matters such as affirmative action (which was being developed during 1996) are implemented. Much faith was also placed on the fact that the transformation priorities had been communicated to departments via the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* and also that state departments had opportunity to contribute towards the development of the *White Paper*. The possibility of ineffective communication was not raised, but it became evident from the Provincial Review Commission's investigations that inefficiency in communication was a major problem in the transformation process. Documents disseminated by the *DPSA* were not successfully backed up with specific instructions with the view to successful implementation (cf. South Africa 1997c: 2.4).

Discussants were also of the opinion that their role in the transformation process was primarily with reference to a number of key responsibilities listed in the *White Paper on Transformation* (1995:6.1.1). These are briefly summarised below in table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Key responsibilities of the *DPSA vis-à-vis* transformation of the public service

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translating the broad policy framework contained in the <i>White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service</i> into achievable policy objectives, performance measures, targets and time-frames.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring effective consultation with all transformation agents throughout the transformation process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring effective coordination of the transformation process at national and provincial levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing effective communication strategies and structures to ensure wide publication of the transformation process and all it entails and implies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a financial resources strategy to support the transformation process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing effective research strategies and structures to support the transformation process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the capacity of <i>DPSA</i> in terms of human and financial resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued review and expansion of the role of <i>DPSA</i> in regards to transformation and the key responsibilities.

Upon investigation of how well the *DPSA* performed with regards to the above key responsibilities in their pursuit of executing the transformation priorities yields some interesting and perhaps dissappointing results. These are treated below (see 6.10 *infra*), particularly in relation to the impact of their performance on transformation of organisational culture aspects. To a large extent it points to a lack of comprehension of the organisational culture perspective. In this regard Schein's remarks regarding the importance of an understanding of the organisational culture among members who drive transformation and organisational culture change (see 3.5.1.1 *supra*) are pertinent.

6.9.1 Organisational culture in policy documents

Two policy documents that can be expected to deal directly with matters that will impact upon the organisational culture of the public service during and after the transformation process are, amongst others, *The Green Paper on a Conceptual Framework for Affirmative Action and the Management of Diversity in the Public Service* (1997h), and the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service*. These documents are dealt with here because they mention, and endeavour to define organisational culture.

It is significant that the latter Green Paper propagates a particular understanding of the organisational culture perspective. It defines organisational culture as referring to:

"... the basic assumptions driving the life of an organisation. These are usually unexpressed, unconscious and unexamined and differ from the organisational systems and values and norms" (1997h: 54).

While this "definition" of organisational culture reflects an acquaintance with Schein's definition (see 2.9 *supra*), it evidently utilises concepts without properly understanding the full meaning or impact of them. "Basic assumptions" for example, derive from values and norms, and cannot be separated from them (see 2.10.3 *supra*).

In order to manage a phenomenon, it is important that it is defined correctly. Concomitantly, if the phenomenon is not defined accurately, the management thereof becomes more difficult or even impossible, since it is not clear what is being managed. This argument may explain the difficulty in managing organisational culture directly in the transformation process, as opposed to addressing other issues, under the false belief that organisational culture is actually being managed. As indicated at 3.3.2.1 *supra*, organisation climate is often manipulated in the belief that it is organisational culture that is being changed. Upon reflection, it may be conjectured that to a large extent, the transformation process wittingly or unwittingly dealt more with the superficial, overt aspects of organisational culture, such as conditions of service and representivity, rather than the deep seated aspects such as values and attitudes.

The *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* treats the organisational culture perspective in relation to "achievement of tasks" and "meeting of needs" in terms of "... more effective customer orientation and a stronger service ethos" (South Africa 1995: chapter 9(c); chapter 4 (f)). When considered in relation to the definition of the *Green Paper*, this interpretation deals more directly with changes in value systems or the establishment of new value systems as required by the definition of organisational culture adopted in this thesis (see 2.9 *supra*).

The creation of this "service ethos", however, is treated as a sub theme of the transformation process, and not as integral to the latter. This, too, seems to indicate that changing organisational culture is treated merely as one aspect of the transformation process; an interpretation that this thesis, based on the research findings on organisational culture, cannot endorse.

It has already been noted that the *RDP* and the *Constitutions* highlight particular matters that directly impact upon, and imply changes in the organisational culture of the public service.

6.10 Additional problems that arose during public service transformation relating to change of organisational culture

Some of the more overt problems that arose during the transformation of the public service so far have been highlighted in the above sections. This section lists some additional problems specifically encountered in relation to the execution of the key responsibilities (see table 6.4) of the *DPSA vis-à-vis* transformation.

i. Translation and communication of the transformation policy framework

While the *DPSA* recognised the need for effective communication in regard to the transformation process (Singh 1996: Interview), it seems as if this aspect was particularly unsuccessful, particularly in so far as the National and provincial departments experienced it. The *Provincial Review Report* (South Africa 1997b), for example, found that provincial departments complained about the poor communication of policies relating to the various transformation priority areas, particularly new human resource policies. Müller and Van Der Waldt (1998: 72) cite statistics that seem to indicate that public officials at national department level complain that the two main problems they experience in regard to transformation of their departments are a lack of efficient communication and a lack of resources and support. This resulted in great variations in interpretation of, for example, the implementation of affirmative action policies, and redeployment of personnel (South Africa 1997b: 3.1, 3.7, 4.2.2, 4.3.4; cf. South Africa 1997c: 2.4 & 2.11). This lack of proper communication also resulted in inefficient control and coordination between departments on both national and provincial levels (South Africa 1997b: 4.1.3, 4.1.5, 4.1.8; cf. Mokgoro 1997: 243). Given the latter state of affairs, Mokgoro's assertion that "... lack of internal and external communication is the greatest enemy of transformation" is very important and to be heeded.

Where implementation guidelines for transformation policies were available, they were conflicting at times, adding to the existing confusion (South Africa 1997b: 3.6). Assam (1998: Interview), for example, indicated the anxiety that

provincial departments have expressed with regards to the new *White Paper on Public Transforming Public Service Delivery* (South Africa 1997d), and that it was on the DPISA's agenda to launch an intensive "road show" nationally in order to explain the need for, and intended impact of this far reaching transformation document. As far as could be determined subsequently, this intensive information campaign never materialised. It seems that, while there exists a flood of policy information, "... there appears to be an assumption at national level that policy will automatically become activity" (South Africa 1997b: 3.1).

ii. *Consultation, liaison, and coordination with transformation partners*

While the various transformation partners are clearly indicated in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service*, and while the DPISA emphasises the need for sustained consultation that would also enable effective coordination, the provincial departments lamented a lack in this regard. It seems as if the provinces experienced that a number of mandates were decided at national level "... with no inputs from provinces, yet the mandates are binding upon the provinces" (South Africa 1997b: 3.8, 3.1). A number of transformation functions were also "highly centralised" (South Africa 1997b: 4.3.3), resulting in incapacity, frustration, and low morale among provincial staff members (South Africa 1997b: 4.2.2, 4.3.6).

The DPISA, in an effort to assess its own performance in regard to consultation during 1996, corroborated the later Provincial Review findings that departments expected broader consultation with regards to the development and implementation of transformation policy and legislation (South Africa 1997b: 2.7).

iii. *Financial resource strategy to support the transformation.*

It is evident that the transformation process cannot be successful without the necessary financial resources made available when and where it is needed. With the redeployment of staff, however, it became evident that no provision

was made for relocation expenses, and that no clear policy guidelines existed on who would meet the expenses (South Africa 1997b: 3.10). Confusion also existed with regards to the departmental financial authority at provincial level, and management of services were not sufficiently budgeted for (South Africa 1997b: 3.11, 3.12). Müller and van der Waldt (1998: 72) found that transformation managers in the national departments experienced the lack of resources and support as a great hurdle in the quest to transform their departments; a hurdle second only to a lack of sufficient and relevant communication.

iv. *Capacity building.*

An important complaint that arose during the Provincial Review was the lack of capacity among provincial departments in relation to the demands made upon the departments by the transformation process. The commission reported that lack of and absence of effective leadership resulted in "... paralysis of the administrative system, in low morale amongst the staff, uncertainty and indecisiveness" (South Africa 1997b: 4.1.2). Due to low capacity strategic planning in departments was often of a low quality, were insufficiently coordinated, and were often not implemented and/or monitored properly (South Africa 1997b: 4.1.3-4.1.10). See also 6.4.1.6 *supra*. This points to a lack of, or insufficient capacity building provision by the *DPSA*, as well as the creation of policy expectations *vis-à-vis* transformation without providing the necessary procedural wherewithal or support (South Africa 1997b: 1.1, 3.12, 4.3.2).

6.11 CONCLUSION

From the consideration of the transformation process with particular reference to the role of the *DPSA* a number of important conclusions may be drawn, *inter alia*:

- i. There was an inevitable need to initially focus on rationalisation of the fragmented public services inherited from the erstwhile South African government before transformation could be embarked upon.
- ii. The rationalisation process was all encompassing, entailing more than mere structural changes of the public services. The result of this was the overlap of rationalisation with transformation, even though the latter was seen as of limited duration. The rationalisation process also resulted in what might be termed a clash of organisational cultures, *i.e.*, the public service now employs individuals on a level of democratic equality who, by virtue of, among other aspects, past exposure, different ideological, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, function from different and conflicting basic assumptions about each other and about the publics they have to serve. These basic assumptions inform their interpretive schemes and their logics of action.

The immediate need, this thesis argues, is for the *DPSA* to establish a maternal holding culture that can disseminate a coherent common vision and value system that can inform new basic assumptions and challenge old ones from a platform of legitimate and authentic power. The mandate that the *DPSA* received to be the main driver of the transformation process provides such a platform, and confers upon it the power and authority to establish the needed strong maternal holding culture. Such a maternal holding culture can, through optimal management, and along with the other transformation role players, create and develop a public service in which the values of the government of the day may be espoused and executed with a view to transforming the South African society.

- iii. However, the transformation process as steered by the *DPSA* evinces an inordinate emphasis upon the development of policy documents as opposed

to the other aspects inherent in transformation. The implementation of these policy imperatives, have evidently not sufficiently been thought through, resulting in frustration at the points of implementation, viz., the national and provincial departments. In addition to the latter the national and provincial departments generally experienced incapacity to deal with matters relating to transformation, resulting in low moral among public officials, inefficiencies, and slow or no real transformation.

- iv. While coherent value systems and relatively clear vision for the new public service exists at the levels of Cabinet and the *DP*SA, it soon became evident that, due to weak coordination and weaker communication a lack of common vision existed on departmental level; nationally and provincially. To a large extent departments were left to their own devices in pursuing the new value systems articulated in policies and legislation. Frequently, it seems, basic assumptions remain intact, resulting in unmanaged conflict detrimental to the transformation process.

In terms of organisational culture the latter issues implied that no coherent maternal holding culture was formed with the purpose of enabling departments to function as sub-cultures in support of the maternal holding culture. While the theoretical and philosophical, and ideological foundations of organisational culture transformation and formation are present (based upon the *RDP* pursuits, the 1993 *Constitution*, particularly the *Constitutional Principles* contained in Schedule four, which formed the basis for the transformation priorities), the lack of understanding of the organisational culture perspective resulted in a lack of capacity to properly manage and change the organisational culture. Due to this lack of understanding definitions of the organisational culture perspective is limited, misleading and not taking into account the multifaceted nature of its existence. What follows from this lack of comprehension is an organic and limited transformation of organisational culture.

Ample evidence from organisational culture research and international experience has been cited in order to indicate the importance of the knowledge and the optimal management of the organisational culture perspective for successful public service transformation. Lack of understanding in this regard seems to prevail within the

South African public service domain, not excluding the main transformation drivers, viz., the *DPSA* and the Minister of Public Service and Administration.

Neglect in regard to knowing, understanding, defining and managing the organisational culture perspective optimally is likely to result in a very slow transformation fraught with unnecessary hurdles, not being able to deal persuasively with barriers such as public officials from the previous order who refuse to support new values, and new public officials who are likely to abuse the current confusion to own benefit from the point of view of entitlement. Such a state of affairs could easily lead to, on the one hand, the transformation process being abandoned, or, on the other hand, to the near anarchy in the South African society informing the transformation process instead of the well management public service transformation leading the transformation in South African society. South African can afford none of the alternatives, and hence has no option but to become more informed about the realities inherent in transformation, and to management these verities in an informed and optimal manner. Knowing, understanding, defining and optimally managing the organisational culture perspective can aid handsomely towards that end.

The next and last chapter of this thesis, viz., chapter seven, will provide a brief summary of the thesis and its findings, and will provide proposals inherent in the issues raised up to this point that may contribute to the successful continuation of the transformation process of the South African public service.

6.12 End notes

¹ The targets and time-frames referred to are as follows:

- Within four years, (from 1995/1996) all departmental establishments must endeavour to be at least 50 percent Black at management level.
- During the same period at least 30 per cent of new recruits to the middle and senior management echelons should be women.
- Within ten years, people with disabilities should comprise 2 per cent of public service personnel.

² Defined here as prevailing patterns of belief, attitudes, and role understandings (Schröter and Röber 1997: 110).

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND PROPOSALS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to do an in depth analysis of the role of the *DPSA* in relation to transformation and organisational culture. The primary aim with the analysis was to investigate whether the *DPSA* as primary driver, overseer, and coordinator, had attended to the important relationship between transformation and organisational culture; taking into account that organisational culture is the *sine qua non* of transformation.

A body of evidence was built up in chapters one through six in order to weigh the primary problem, and other related problems against the accumulated evidence. From the latter exercise some salient conclusions, which have already been alluded to in the foregoing chapters, are presented. A number of pertinent proposals pertaining to the possible contribution of the organisational culture perspective to public service transformation are then presented.

7.2 Considering the evidence

Consideration of the transformation process as driven by the *DPSA* provides ample evidence that limited attention was given to the organisational culture perspective during the transformation process to date. Where cognisance was taken of the phenomenon, it has been defined in a very limited and simplistic fashion, primarily with reference to improved service delivery (6.9.1 & 6.9.2 *supra*). Due to the incorrect and limited understanding that seems to prevail among the transformation drivers within the South African milieu, of which the *DPSA* is principal, the organisational culture perspective has not received the attention it is likely to have received had it been understood correctly and its possible influence upon transformation of the public service appreciated sufficiently. Empirical evidence cited in the text of the thesis points to the measures of success experienced in case experiments, such as the Singaporean experience (3.8.2 & 6.6 *supra*), the United

States General Accounting Office (GAO; 3.5.3 *supra*), and the German Democratic Republic (3.8.2 & 6.6 *supra*), where the organisational culture perspective have been recognised, appreciated and managed appropriately. Additionally, the content analysis of the literature on organisational culture and transformation serves to convince that organisational culture is the *sine qua non* of transformation. This leads to the conclusion that transforming the public service without attending more deliberately and resolutely to the simultaneous changing of organisational culture of the public service, establishing new values and basic assumptions, will yield a less than successfully transformed public service.

Accumulatively the evidence resulting from the South African public service transformation experiment in relation to the literature and case experiments on organisational culture transformation serves to confirm that not much deliberate attention has been given to organisational culture in the transformation process. The evidence indicates that while there may likely be other reasons for the lack of successful transformation to date, it could also, and largely, be ascribed to the fact that the organisational culture perspective has been, for the most part, not deliberately attended to (3.5.2 iv, 5.6; 6.6 & 6.9.1 *supra*), ill defined (6.9.1 *supra*), or allowed to change organically along with "other" transformation priorities (6.9 *supra*). This resulted in intervention efforts that could be described as ineffective and even harmful (*cf.* 6.9 *supra*).

The weak or limited maternal holding culture established by the *DPSSA* (1.7.5, 6.7 *supra*), evidently by default as a result of its legislated position as main driver of public service transformation, did not, and does not convincingly manage the dissemination of the new public service organisational culture values as contained in, *inter alia*, the *Constitution* and the foundational *Constitutional Principles*, the *RDP* ideals, and the priorities articulated in the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* (4.2, 6.9 & 6.10 *supra*). This has resulted in:

- i. an apparent lack of clarity as to the direction of the transformation (5.5, 5.6, 5.8 *supra*)
- ii. an apparent lack of competence to steer the transformation where the need for it has been recognised and supported (6.4.1.1-6.4.1.8; 6.10 *supra*), and;

- iii. an apparent inability to deal appropriately with hurdles in the way of public service transformation (3.5.1.1, 6.9 & 6.10 *supra*).

7.3 Reasons for the apparent minimal success of the transformation of the public service.

When considering the research problem against the background of the accumulated evidence resulting from the research for this thesis, some significant reasons for the apparent minimal success (6.4.1.1-6.4.1.8; 6.10) of the public service transformation within the South African context surface. These are listed and briefly elucidated below.

7.3.1 Lack of management capacity to deal with organisational culture

The transformation priorities (4.5.1.2 & 6.4.1 *supra*), the process of transformation (4.9 *supra*), and the process of organisational culture transformation (3.5.3 *supra*) require the addressing and execution of many parallel and simultaneous processes (4.5 & 6.4.1 *supra*). Transformation in addition requires the total embarking upon new second order, discontinuous changes (4.11.1.1 & 4.11.1.2 *supra*), requiring adoption of new values and interpretive schemes (3.6, 3.7, 4.12iii-iv, 5.6.1, 6.6 & 6.8 *supra*). The latter would create uncertainty, dissonance, instability, and potential chaos. Taken together, this state of affairs requires increased capacity to coordinate, communicate, plan, organise, lead, and control; viz., increased managerial capacity, particularly on the part of the DPISA, but also on the part of the other partners who have responsibility for steering the transformation process (4.5.1.3 & 6.3 *supra*). It has been indicated (6.4.1.3, 6.4.1.6 & 6.9 *supra*) that, in general, there exists a lack of such necessary managerial capacity in the public service. This aspect, more than any other, needs urgent attention in order to make the transformation process, and hence the organisational culture change process successful (3.5.1.1 *supra*).

7.3.2 Focus on policy development without attention to policy implementation

The definition of the transformation process (4.5.1 *supra*) requires that the vision towards which the public service is being transformed, based on new value pursuits (6.8 *supra*, cf. 5.6 & 6.5 *supra*) be articulated clearly, and that its details be enshrined in policies and legislation. While the *DPSA* has performed well in this regard, it seems to have focussed inordinately on the development of enabling policy, and not giving much attention to the implementation of such policies (6.10i *supra*). This statement by no means implies that policy development should be neglected. It is indeed the policy guidelines that serve as articulation of espoused values. Consider, for example the *Batho Pele White Paper*, a policy document that articulates the value of improved efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery. It merely indicates that an exclusive focus on policy development, while disregarding the generation of guidelines for the execution of policy ideals and the prescribing of related control and punitive measures for non-compliance, may lead to frustration, licence and even anarchy (cf. 6.4.1.8 *supra*). This led to frustration in the national departments where these policies were required to be executed although no clear guidelines seemed to have existed with regards to the required execution (6.10i, cf. 4.9.1iii, vi *supra*).

7.3.3 Failure to establish a public service organisational culture approach that is feasible and applicable in the South African context.

Since there seems to be a lack of comprehension of the organisational culture perspective in the public service (6.9 & 6.9.1 *supra*), it can be reasonably concluded that, if any at all, a non-feasible approach for the management and transformation of organisational culture (cf. 3.8 *supra*) would be in use. A true understanding of the organisational culture perspective, including its impact on public service transformation requires the development, adoption and application of a feasible approach in order to transform and sustainably manage organisational culture change during and after the transformation of the public service. This is premised upon the need for management capacity development (3.5.1.1; 3.8.1, 3.8.1.3 *supra*), including the need to inculcate an awareness of the relationship between

organisational culture and transformation (4.10 & 5.6 *supra*) in an effort to avoid transforming the public service based on trial and error *cf.* 3.5.1.1 *supra*).

7.3.4 Incomplete comprehension of the organisational culture perspective

It has been shown that the *DPSA* as the main driver of the transformation process defines organisational culture in a limited fashion (6.9.1 *supra*), with the result that a limited and inaccurate comprehension of the organisational culture perspective prevails. This, in turn, makes it impossible or, at the very least, very difficult for the public service organisational culture to be transformed appropriately according to the vision of the government (6.4 & 6.8 *supra*).

It should also be noted that, because of the incomplete comprehension of the organisational culture perspective (6.9.1 *supra*), and the lack of deliberate attention afforded organisational culture in the transformation process (6.7 *supra*) there seems to be a lack of appreciation in regard to the relationship between organisational culture and transformation (*cf.* 4.10 *supra*).

Issues of attitudinal change and inculcating of values are treated as aspects separate from what is regarded by the *DPSA* as real transformation, such as structural and organisational changes and changes in employment conditions (6.4.1 *supra*). This lack of true comprehension, in turn, results in unconsciously allowing organisational culture to transform on its own momentum and in an unmanaged manner (*cf.* 6.9 *supra*, *cf.* 4.10 *supra*). Often change in organisational culture is resisted, with the result that old organisational cultures are frequently retained (5.8 & 6.10 *supra*).

7.3.5 Lack of functional maternal holding culture

The *DPSA* as the primary driver, overseer and coordinator of the transformation process on behalf of the Cabinet (4.5.1.3 & 6.3 *supra*) is also regarded as the primary culture carrier since it, along with the Minister of the Public Service and

Administration are tasked with transmitting the culture and values of the new South African government to the various national and provincial departments (6.7 *supra*, cf. 2.11, 3.2 & 3.5.3, *supra*). From an organisational culture perspective it is imperative to establish a maternal holding culture in order to relate effectively, efficiently, and optimally to the various sub-culture departments (2.11 & 3.2 *supra*).

The *DPSA*, by virtue of its position of primary overseer of the transformation process, symbolises a maternal holding culture. The fact that it is also, from a policy point of view, responsible for the coordination of the transformation process, and that it provides the policies related to transformation emphasises its position as the maternal holding culture.

The one-sided emphasis of the *DPSA*, viz., policy development, led to the neglect of the other functions of a maternal holding culture such as primarily providing leadership and guidance in regard to transformation (6.10 *supra*, cf. 6.3 *supra*) and serving as an example in the application of value systems. The transmission of values in practice rather than values as policy statements have not been successful. This resulted in the national and provincial departments, *i.e.*, sub-cultures (3.2 *supra*) of the *DPSA*, being left with very little support in transforming themselves (6.7 *supra*).

7.3.6 Lack of national vision

As late into the transformation process as 1998 the *PRC* reported a lack of national vision *vis-à-vis* the transformation process in the public service (6.8 *supra*). The *PRC*, however, seems to confuse the execution of goals relating to the vision with the existence of a vision. Evidence indicates that there does exist a well-articulated vision that evidently enjoys a high degree of endorsement (6.8 *supra*), but that there exists a lack of national practice in the execution of the vision. National and provincial departments have, however, claimed not to always understand the implementation and implications of the specifics of the espoused vision (6.4.1.2 & 6.8 *supra*), due to weak communication from the *DPSA* and the lack of

understanding among national and provincial departments of what transformation within their particular domains entails.

7.3.7 Lack of political will and administrative support to apply salient aspects of organisational culture transformation

The transformation process, of which organisational culture transformation is a *sine qua non* (4.10 *supra*), requires informed, definite, and committed political and administrative leadership in order to be successful (4.9.1, 3.8.2, 5.9.4 *supra*, cf. 3.5.3 *supra*). Except for a few instances (cf. 3.5.3 v, vii *supra*), there seemed very little decisive action with regards to organisational culture transformation.

7.3.8 Non-management or inappropriate management of organisational culture perspective

The *DPSA* has the responsibility of driving the transformation process in consultation with other important transformation partners. Within the context of this thesis, this function makes of the *DPSA* the main culture carrier in the establishment of a new organisational culture and the replacement of the untenable aspects of the old public service organisational culture (2.8.11, 2.11 & 6.6.2 *supra*). It is therefore the responsibility of the *DPSA*, in its coordinating and overseeing role, to, on behalf of the citizenry of South Africa, articulate and capture the views, aspirations and corporate psyche of the latter citizens, and to match the resultant vision to that of the *RDP* and the *Constitution*, giving attention to discrepancies, and enabling public officials to transform their basic assumptions, interpretive schemes, and logics of action in line with the *RDP* and *Constitutional* goals. The result of this, ideally, will be the turning of the espoused visions into the visions in action. Such definite, directional, and coordinating leadership from the *DPSA* seem to have been lacking (6.7 *supra*; cf. South Africa 1999/2000 On line).

7.3.9 Lack of effective communication and coordination

A main complaint of national and provincial departments is a lack of effective communication from the *DPSA vis-à-vis* what is expected of them in relation to public service transformation (6.9 & 6.10 *supra*). While certain executive powers had been delegated to the provincial departments (6.7 *supra*), it became evident that the *DPSA* as well as central government held certain expectations in relation to transformation in the national and provincial department spheres, but that neither these expectations nor methods and procedures of achieving them were effectively communicated to the departments. While enabling policies were available, methods and procedures, time frames, and finances were not readily available (6.10 iii *supra*). Consultation seldom took place (6.10 i, ii *supra*), resulting in variations in interpretation of how to implement and execute transformation priorities.

7.4 Proposals for inculcating an organisational culture perspective for improved public service transformation

In light of the above findings relating to the impact of organisational culture on the transformation of the public service the following proposals are made with a view to improving the transformation process currently underway. No transformation can avoid being plagued by problems such as ideological or value misunderstanding, retardation due to actions by opponents and even proponents, rapidly changing ambient environments and sheer vastness of the transformation project involved. These problems are multiplied in the case of the transformation that forms the object of this thesis (4.2-4.4 *supra*). While the problems cannot be avoided, it is possible to manage them judiciously.

In an effort to contribute towards the successful transformation of the South African public service, and towards the judicious management of transformation challenges, it has been correctly pointed out that the organisational culture perspective is a *sine qua non* of public service transformation, and hence needs to be managed with this in mind in order to increase the success of the transformation process. The following proposals are offered in an attempt to improve the transformation of the public

service, and to highlight the role of organisational culture in improving the transformation process.

7.4.1 Establishment and application of a maternal holding culture

Considering the predominant role that the *DPSA* has to play as the principal overseer, driver, and coordinator of the transformation process, together with the understanding of the relationship between transformation and organisational culture that this thesis contends for, makes it imperative that the *DPSA* establishes a maternal holding culture (2.11 & 6.7 *supra*) in relation to the national and provincial departments that would relate to it as sub-cultures (*cf.* 1.7.5 & 3.2 *supra*). The functions of a maternal holding culture would, among other things, be to generate and articulate relevant broad policy frameworks, and communicate these to the sub-cultures in order for the latter to clearly understand its role in the achievement of public service goals (*cf.* 6.4.1.2 *supra*). The maternal holding culture, while coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the functions of all departments to ascertain the harmony of each in relation to the broad policy frameworks (2.11 *supra*), allows for differentiation according to the ambient environment in which the different departments might find themselves (2.11 & 6.7 *supra*).

The importance of an effective and relevant maternal holding culture is emphasised by the utilisation of the public service as an instrument to transform the South African society. In order to achieve the transformation goals, and to exercise the mandate from Cabinet *vis-à-vis* public service transformation (4.5.1.3, 6.3 & 6.7 *supra*) of the latter there needs to exist a single body (maternal holding culture) that drives and coordinates all other functionaries towards common transformation goals embedded in a common vision (6.8 *supra*).

The maternal holding culture established by the *DPSA*, in consultation with the other transformation partners, should:

- i. Portray the ideal, envisioned culture.
- ii. Enable the transfer of this culture to the sub-cultures.

- iii. Through providing relevant information on what the organisational culture ought to be, and clearly communicating this enable the transfer and implementation of new values that promote the new public service vision.
- iv. Through an exhibition of personal and departmental commitment, the development of enabling legislation, and the provision of applicable guidelines, methods and procedures in order to facilitate implementation, transform existing organisational cultures that are contrary to the one envisioned.
- v. Ensure regular monitoring and review of whether the maternal holding culture is reflected in the functioning of the various sub-cultures.
- vi. Embark upon an *attitude review* (6.6, *supra*, cf. 2.8.3 & 5.6.1*supra*) of the officials employed in the public service, and provide opportunities for attitude transformation in line with the new values, visions and goals of the public service. Attitude transformation informed by new values, requires investment of time and finances. Great dividends may, however, be yielded in terms of changed interpretive schemes, logics of action, and actual changed behaviour in line with the new values, visions, and goals.

7.4.2 Fostering the common vision

The challenge that the *DPSA* faces in the current dynamic environment of transformation places a heavy onus on it to provide a strong sense of the espoused vision and direction, and to create coherent across-government strategies and well-integrated action plans to bring the vision to fruition. In doing this, the *DPSA* will provide a sense of priority and focus, and help to create a sense of common purpose in the public service.

7.4.3 Political commitment

Political commitment to public service transformation could be expressed in various ways, such as taking action against corruption (6.4.1.8 *supra*) and against resistance to transformation due to ideological differences (3.5.3 & 6.2iii b, 6.4.1.3 *supra*).

Political commitment could also find expression in personal conduct of politicians that promote new visions and values (3.5.3, 3.8.2 & 4.9.1ii, vi *supra*), and in requiring administrative managers and subordinates to exhibit new values and behaviours in their own lives, words and actions. Since transformation and organisational culture change in the public service are primarily political endeavours (4.4 *supra*), a high degree of political commitment is imperative in order for these processes to be successful.

The establishment of new basic assumptions assumes that new value systems replace old value systems and hence old interpretive schemes. Those who cannot or will not espouse such will make it impossible, either overtly or covertly, for new values to become embedded in basic assumptions, and hence resist transformation (3.5.3.vii & 4.9.1.v *supra*). Political commitment in order to deal with such issues is imperative for successful transformation and organisational culture change.

On the positive side, it is important for supporters and promoters of the new values, as well as those who embody it through the display of new interpretive schemes, logics of action and actual action, to be rewarded accordingly. The rewarding, as well as the application of punitive measures should take place transparently in an effort to persuade onlookers to adapt behaviours and interpretive schemes, as a result of the adoption of the new, acceptable, value systems.

7.4.4 Promoting comprehension of the organisational culture perspective

Managing the transformation of public service organisational culture, then, assumes not only the creation and communication of new values, but also the active intervention to guarantee acceptance thereof, and to urgently and definitely address areas of resistance (3.5.3 *supra*). The role of managers, therefore, would involve, among others, the important aspect of constantly reinforcing the new organisational culture by word and example (4.9.1 *supra*), and the sustained use of symbols and artefacts that represent the new organisational culture and the implied new interpretive schemes (2.8.1 & 3.6 *supra*). The necessary example and inculcation of the new organisational culture needs to be supported and sustained for a sufficient

length of time in order to permit a critical mass of public officials and departments to share the new organisational culture; hence transforming the *values espoused* into the *values in action* (6.4.1.7 *supra*).

7.4.5 Communication and coordination strategies

As indicated (4.9.1vi *supra*), effective communication and coordination are imperative in order for transformation and organisational culture change to be effective. Parties involved in transformation and organisational culture change can only undertake such transformations and changes if enabled through clear, unambiguous communication (6.10 *supra*) in regard to what is expected of them in terms of transformation goals, new visions, and new value systems and how it can be achieved. Lack of clear communication is likely to result in the maintenance of old interpretive schemes, behaviour patterns and attitudes that are inconsistent with new values, interpretive schemes, behaviour patterns and attitudes.

7.4.6 Managing capacity building

The major challenge, gleaned from the above, is for management capacity building, since managers, political and administrative, are the most important transformation drivers and culture carriers (4.5.1.3 & 6.7*supra*). Capacity building is needed in many domains, including the need for effective and efficient communication, improved management competencies and skills,

This implies that the *SAMD* as the body to whom the responsibility for training in the public service falls (6.4.1.6 *supra*) should play a major role in management development, with an emphasis on transformation and organisational culture training, taking into account the aspects as treated in this thesis.

The initiative taken by the *DPSA* in the establishment of a *Senior Management Service (SMS)* (6.4.1.6 *supra*), is likely to serve an important purpose in professionalising the public service. It is hoped that in the envisaged consultations

with tertiary institutions and other parties that have vested interests in the development of the SMS (6.4.1.6 *supra*), the need for the development of the necessary comprehension of the organisational culture perspective *vis-à-vis* the transformation of the public service will be recognised and accorded the necessary credence.

The improvement of managerial capacity requires, among other aspects:

- i. Training in what transformation entails.
- ii. Training in the necessary management of the transformation process.
- iii. The training and awareness-making of the organisational culture perspective.
- iv. Awareness-making of the impact that organisational culture has on public service transformation, and hence the importance of the organisational culture perspective to the transformation of the public service.
- v. Awareness-making of the multi-faceted nature of the organisational culture perspective.
- vi. Training in the management and transformation of the organisational culture perspective.

Improving management capacity by creating an awareness and understanding of the organisational culture perspective and all it entails will equip the public service manager, particular those tasked with the responsibility to drive the transformation process, to deal with all matters relating to transformation and organisational culture more circumspectly, from a basis of being properly informed. The articulation, management, and transformation of organisational culture are primarily management responsibilities. Where informed, capable management is non-existent, there will inevitably exist an underestimation of the difficulties that accompany organisational culture change and transformation (6.9 *supra*).

7.4.7 Adoption of a feasible organisational cultural approach

The above proposals could all be applied within a specific maternal holding culture, disseminating the necessary information effectively, and providing the leadership

and management needs of the various national and state departments as determined by their contexts. Chapter three of this thesis (3.8 *supra*) explains the need for the adoption of a particular approach to organisational culture for purposes of effectively, efficiently and optimally managing the organisational culture of the public service. This aspect also relates to the need of intelligently dealing with organisational culture as opposed to dealing with it unconsciously, unsystematically, or arbitrarily (*cf.* 6.9 *supra*).

For purposes of this thesis a *synthesis* of the approaches explained at 3.8.1.1-3.8.1.4 *supra* is proposed for managing organisational culture in the South African public service during and after the period of transformation. The organisational culture approach that should be emphasised at any point during the transformation should be a function of the stage of growth of the new public service in general, and departments in particular. The following steps are envisioned as the proposed approach:

- i. While the South African public service still finds itself in the early stages of the transformation process, it is suggested that, for a brief period, the *cultural control* approach (3.8.1.1 *supra*) be adopted, in order to, amongst other goals:
 - a. provide guidance to the national and provincial departments,
 - b. foster and embrace a new maternal holding culture,
 - c. model the direction and acceptance of new value systems, and
 - d. unearth and expunge old inconsistent maternal holding cultures and sub cultures, including the concomitant interpretive schemes and logics of action.

This is particularly necessary due to the fact that the *DPSA* as primary culture carrier has to replace the organisational culture of the erstwhile public service (6.5 *supra*).

- ii. After a brief period, as the new public service ages and the new values, artefacts and assumptions become established and rooted in the realm of basic assumptions (see 2.8.3 *supra*), another and supporting approach, viz., *public service* approach (3.8.1.2 *supra*), should receive more emphasis.

- iii. While the application of the *cultural control* approach is underway, however, there should be a simultaneous, conscious steering towards the goals of the public service approach since the latter evidently emphasises the positive aspects of the *cultural control*, *sub-cultural*, and *professional-managerial multicultural* approaches while avoiding their negative aspects. This calls for a constant vigilance and circumspect application of the different culture approaches.

In the process of adopting or emphasising a particular approach, the existence of sub-cultures and organisation climates where individual cultures and climates are given credence and allowed expression within the framework of the adopted maternal holding culture must be accommodated.

The transformation process constitutes and is impacted upon by many factors that will determine or influence which approach of organisational culture is adopted and put into practice at any given time. These factors include the age, or stage of development, of the public service, the political situation, the participation of civil society, and the level of competence and training of the public officials. The application of the chosen approach, then, has to take these factors into account.

7.5 Future research

The problems experienced by the *DPSSA* in the transformation of the public service pointed to the serious need of embarking upon research relating to all aspects of discontinuous change in the public sector. The size of the public service as well as the South African ethnic, cultural, and language heterogeneities, along with the deep-rooted results of the apartheid past makes it imperative to focus future research on myriad relevant transformation topics. Some of the more salient related to, and derived from, the research for this thesis are listed below. These topics are presented in the form of problem statements.

- i. What is the impact and influence of the former South African administrative systems on the values and attitude patterns of public officials?
- ii. What is the influence of diversity/heterogeneity on the transfer and transformation of organisational culture?
- iii. Is there a need for cultural and personal transformation in the new public service?
- iv. How can the transfer of organisational culture between the spheres of government be enabled?
- v. How may sustained management of discontinuous change in government and the public service be enabled?
- vi. How can the transformation process taking place in each department be monitored and evaluated to determine the pace and quality of transformation?
- vii. How may monitoring and evaluation mechanisms based upon the transformation goals and priorities of the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* be developed optimally?
- viii. How do government or political ideology and policy influence the work function and psyche of the public official (incumbent and new)?
- ix. How can qualitative changes in the public service environment that would impact directly upon changes in organisational culture (for example changes in values and service ethos) be assessed and managed?
- x. How can quantitative changes in the public service environment that would impact directly upon changes in organisational culture (for example increased number of black and female managers) be assessed and managed?

7.6 Conclusion

The importance of organisational culture to successful transformation of the public service cannot be over estimated. The heterogeneity of the South African public service, with the potential that it holds for conflicting value systems, requires the establishment of a common value system that is not only espoused, but also allowed to find manifestation in changed behaviour due to transformed attitudes and basic assumptions derived from new values. The nature of organisational culture change, as described in this thesis, requires increased management capacity in all spheres of

government. Such management capacity building should be aimed at yielding transformational leaders and culture carriers that pursue a common public service vision, while enabling public officials in their different spheres to maintain their salient unique characteristics based upon their peculiar line and/or auxiliary functions. In this light, viz., the need for common vision while maintaining the required unique characteristics, it is important to establish a maternal holding culture that is aware of the role of organisational culture in the transformation process. This growing awareness should ideally lead to application of the organisational culture perspective in the transformation of the public service, and, in so doing, achieve the transformation of the South African society in line with the goals of Reconstruction and Development and the Constitutional principles.

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Annexure 1

(Un)structured interview questions on Organisational Culture in the South African Public Service – submitted to Dr Malah Singh (DPSA Transformation Unit) in order to indicate direction of interview(s) and discussions – 1996/1997.

1. How would you define/ explain organisational culture in the South African public service? Or perhaps more specifically, how is the term used by the Transformation Unit of OMPSA?
(this question is asked in light of the fact that the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Sector* seems to draw a too fine distinction between changing the organisational culture in the public service and the transformation process *per sé*).
2. Related to the above, what is meant by *transformation* in relation to the South African public service?
(assuming that it could/does mean something different (even if only by a few degrees) when it is used in another setting).
3. Who determines the new organisational culture of the South Africa public service?
(stated somewhat differently perhaps? Who/what is/are the source(s) that inform and influence a new public service organisational culture in South Africa? (OMPSA, the Constitution, the Minister of Public Service and Administration, citizenry, ???).
4. Would you agree that the Public Service Commission (or Commission for Administration) of the previous government determined or interpreted, and disseminated the core organisational culture of and for the public service (or, more accurately, public services?).

How does OMPSA plan to execute this role in the transformation the South Africa public service?

5. If OMPSA can only advise other state departments with regards to the new public service organisational culture, does this imply that departmental ministers can have the freedom of practicing parochialism?

(or, How will/does OMPSA ensure that the different ministries implement or give effect to the new value system?)

(Related to the latter, does OMPSA have “teeth” or does/will it deal with dissent vicariously through the Public Protector, for example? – assuming that the citizenry would be sensitive to violations of the core values, and would know where to take recourse to)

6. Do you envisage that core values and principles would filter through from the highest to the lowest spheres of government?, and

What mechanisms will be put in place to ensure this filtering through?

7. If you could identify the *core values*, what would they be?
(i.e., what would be the goal of embarking on a transformation process in the public service?)
8. The *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service* regularly implies that attention will have to be devoted to the teaching of the new organisational culture. Is the intention to expose public officials on all levels of government to this teaching? How?
9. Taking into account the role of artefacts (in organisational culture – visible externals such as uniforms, dress code, letter heads, office space, etc. [the style and format of the Public Service Commission's last two annual reports are relevant examples) in the identification and dissemination of organisational culture (as per many researchers of organisational culture), do you believe that these could actually play a major role in the South African setting? Why/How?

Annexure 2: Laws repealed by section 43(1) of the Public Service Act (1994)

SCHEDULE 3

LAWS REPEALED BY SECTION 43 (1)

Number and year of law	Short title	Extent of repeal
Act No. 2 of 1972 (Lebowa).....	Lebowa Public Service Act, 1972	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 4 of 1972 (Bophuthatswana)	Bophuthatswana Public Service Act, 1972	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 5 of 1972 (Gazankulu)	Gazankulu Public Service Act, 1972	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 5 of 1973 (QwaQwa)...	QwaQwa Public Service Act, 1973	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 5 of 1973 (KaNgwane)	KaNgwane Public Service Act, 1973	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 43 of 1978 (Transkei)..	Transkei Public Service Act, 1978	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 2 of 1981 (Ciskei).....	Ciskei Public Service Act, 1981	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 3 of 1981 (KwaNdebele)	KwaNdebele Public Service Act, 1981 ..	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 111 of 1984.....	Public Service Act, 1984.....	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 67 of 1985.....	Public Service Laws Amendment Act, 1985	The repeal of sections 2 and 3
Act No. 7 of 1986 (Venda).....	Venda Public Service Commission Act, 1986	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 8 of 1986 (Venda).....	Venda Public Service Act, 1986.....	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 22 of 1986.....	Public Service Amendment Act, 1986....	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 4 of 1989 (KaNgwane)	KaNgwane Public Service Commission Act, 1989	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 5 of 1990 (KwaZulu) ...	KwaZulu Public Service Act, 1990	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 6 of 1990 (KwaZulu) ...	KwaZulu Public Service Commission Act, 1990	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 120 of 1990.....	Public Service Laws Amendment Act, 1990	The repeal of sections 2, 3 and 4
Act No. 57 of 1991.....	Public Service Amendment Act, 1991....	The repeal of the whole
Act No. 47 of 1993.....	Public Service Acts Amendment Act, 1993	The repeal of sections 2 to 10
Act No. 102 of 1993.....	Public Service Labour Relations Act, 1993	The repeal of section 27 and the Schedule
Act No. 179 of 1993.....	Public Service Amendment Act, 1993....	The repeal of the whole

Annexure 3

Constitution of the Republic of South African (Act 200 of 1993) Schedule 4

CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

[Schedule 4 amended by s. 13 of Act 2 of 1994 and by s. 2 of Act 3 of 1994.]

I

The Constitution of South Africa shall provide for the establishment of one sovereign state, a common South African citizenship and a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between men and women and people of all races.

II

Everyone shall enjoy all universally accepted fundamental rights, freedoms and civil liberties, which shall be provided for and protected by entrenched and justiciable provisions in the Constitution, which shall be drafted after having given due consideration to inter alia the fundamental rights contained in Chapter 3 of this Constitution.

III

The Constitution shall prohibit racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination and shall promote racial and gender equality and national unity.

IV

The Constitution shall be the supreme law of the land. It shall be binding on all organs of state at all levels of government.

V

The legal system shall ensure the equality of all before the law and an equitable legal process. Equality before the law includes laws, programmes or activities that have as their object the amelioration of the conditions of the disadvantaged, including those disadvantaged on the grounds of race, colour or gender.

VI

There shall be a separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary, with appropriate checks and balances to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness.

VII

The judiciary shall be appropriately qualified, independent and impartial and shall have the power and jurisdiction to safeguard and enforce the Constitution and all fundamental rights.

VIII

There shall be representative government embracing multi-party democracy, regular elections, universal adult suffrage, a common voters' roll, and, in general, proportional representation.

IX

Provision shall be made for freedom of information so that there can be open and accountable administration at all levels of government.

X

Formal legislative procedures shall be adhered to by legislative organs at all levels of government.

XI

The diversity of language and culture shall be acknowledged and protected, and conditions for their promotion shall be encouraged.

XII

Collective rights of self-determination in forming, joining and maintaining organs of civil society, including linguistic, cultural and religious associations, shall, on the basis of non-discrimination and free association, be recognised and protected.

XIII

1. The institution, status and role of traditional leadership, according to indigenous law, shall be recognised and protected in the Constitution. Indigenous law, like common law, shall be recognised and applied by the courts, subject to the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution and to legislation dealing specifically therewith.
2. Provisions in a provincial constitution relating to the institution, role, authority and status of a traditional monarch shall be recognised and protected in the Constitution .

[Constitutional Principle XIII substituted by s. 2 of Act 3 of 1994.]

XIV

Provision shall be made for participation of minority political parties in the legislative process in a manner consistent with democracy.

XV

Amendments to the Constitution shall require special procedures involving special majorities.

XVI

Government shall be structured at national, provincial and local levels.

XVII

At each level of government there shall be democratic representation. This principle shall not derogate from the provisions of Principle XIII.

XVIII

1. The powers and functions of the national government and provincial governments and the boundaries of the provinces shall be defined in the Constitution.
2. The powers and functions of the provinces defined in the Constitution, including the competence of a provincial legislature to adopt a constitution for its province, shall not be substantially less than or substantially inferior to those provided for in this Constitution.
3. The boundaries of the provinces shall be the same as those established in terms of this Constitution.
4. Amendments to the Constitution which alter the powers, boundaries, functions or institutions of provinces shall in addition to any other procedures specified in the Constitution for constitutional amendments, require the approval of a special majority of the legislatures of the provinces, alternatively, if there is such a chamber, a two-thirds majority of a chamber of Parliament composed of provincial representatives, and if the amendment concerns specific provinces only, the approval of the legislatures of such provinces will also be needed.
5. Provision shall be made for obtaining the views of a provincial legislature concerning all constitutional amendments regarding its powers, boundaries and functions.

[Constitutional Principle XVIII substituted by s. 13 (a) of Act 2 of 1994.]

XIX

The powers and functions at the national and provincial levels of government shall include exclusive and concurrent powers as well as the power to perform functions for other levels of government on an agency or delegation basis.

XX

Each level of government shall have appropriate and adequate legislative and executive powers and functions that will enable each level to function effectively. The allocation of powers between different levels of government shall be made on a basis which is conducive to financial viability at each level of government and to effective public administration, and which recognises the need for and promotes national unity and legitimate provincial autonomy and acknowledges cultural diversity.

XXI

The following criteria shall be applied in the allocation of powers to the national government and the provincial governments:

1. The level at which decisions can be taken most effectively in respect of the quality and rendering of services, shall be the level responsible and accountable for the quality and the rendering of the services, and such level shall accordingly be empowered by the Constitution to do so.
2. Where it is necessary for the maintenance of essential national standards, for the establishment of minimum standards required for the rendering of services, the maintenance of economic unity, the maintenance of national security or the prevention of unreasonable action taken by one province which is prejudicial to the interests of another province or the country as a whole, the Constitution shall empower the national government to intervene through legislation or such other steps as may be defined in the Constitution.
3. Where there is necessity for South Africa to speak with one voice, or to act as a single entity- in particular in relation to other states- powers should be allocated to the national government.
4. Where uniformity across the nation is required for a particular function, the legislative power over that function should be allocated predominantly, if not wholly, to the national government.
5. The determination of national economic policies, and the power to promote interprovincial commerce and to protect the common market in respect of the mobility of goods, services, capital and labour, should be allocated to the national government.
6. Provincial governments shall have powers, either exclusively or concurrently with the national government, inter alia-
 - a. for the purposes of provincial planning and development and the rendering of services; and
 - b. in respect of aspects of government dealing with specific socio-economic and cultural needs and the general well-being of the inhabitants of the province.
7. Where mutual co-operation is essential or desirable or where it is required to guarantee equality of opportunity or access to a government service, the powers should be allocated concurrently to the national government and the provincial governments.
8. The Constitution shall specify how powers which are not specifically allocated in the Constitution to the national government or to a provincial government,

shall be dealt with as necessary ancillary powers pertaining to the powers and functions allocated either to the national government or provincial governments.

XXII

The national government shall not exercise its powers (exclusive or concurrent) so as to encroach upon the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of the provinces.

XXIII

In the event of a dispute concerning the legislative powers allocated by the Constitution concurrently to the national government and provincial governments which cannot be resolved by a court on a construction of the Constitution, precedence shall be given to the legislative powers of the national government.

XXIV

A framework for local government powers, functions and structures shall be set out in the Constitution. The comprehensive powers, functions and other features of local government shall be set out in parliamentary statutes or in provincial legislation or in both.

XXV

The national government and provincial governments shall have fiscal powers and functions which will be defined in the Constitution. The framework for local government referred to in Principle XXIV shall make provision for appropriate fiscal powers and functions for different categories of local government.

XXVI

Each level of government shall have a constitutional right to an equitable share of revenue collected nationally so as to ensure that provinces and local governments are able to provide basic services and execute the functions allocated to them.

XXVII

A Financial and Fiscal Commission, in which each province shall be represented, shall recommend equitable fiscal and financial allocations to the provincial and local governments from revenue collected nationally, after taking into account the national interest, economic disparities between the provinces as well as the population and developmental needs, administrative responsibilities and other legitimate interests of each of the provinces.

XXVIII

Notwithstanding the provisions of Principle XII, the right of employers and employees to join and form employer organisations and trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining shall be recognised and protected. Provision shall be made that every person shall have the right to fair labour practices.

XXIX

The independence and impartiality of a Public Service Commission, a Reserve Bank, an Auditor-General and a Public Protector shall be provided for and safeguarded by the Constitution in the interests of the maintenance of effective public finance and administration and a high standard of professional ethics in the public service.

XXX

1. There shall be an efficient, non-partisan, career-orientated public service broadly representative of the South African community, functioning on a basis of fairness and which shall serve all members of the public in an unbiased and impartial manner, and shall, in the exercise of its powers and in compliance with its duties, loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day in the performance of its administrative functions. The structures and functioning of the public service, as well as the terms and conditions of service of its members, shall be regulated by law.
2. Every member of the public service shall be entitled to a fair pension.

XXXI

Every member of the security forces (police, military and intelligence), and the security forces as a whole, shall be required to perform their functions and exercise their powers in the national interest and shall be prohibited from furthering or prejudicing party political interest.

XXXII

The Constitution shall provide that until 30 April 1999 the national executive shall be composed and shall function substantially in the manner provided for in Chapter 6 of this Constitution.

XXXIII

The Constitution shall provide that, unless Parliament is dissolved on account of its passing a vote of no-confidence in the Cabinet, no national election shall be held before 30 April 1999.

XXXIV

1. This Schedule and the recognition therein of the right of the South African people as a whole to self-determination, shall not be construed as precluding,

within the framework of the said right, constitutional provision for a notion of the right to self-determination by any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage, whether in a territorial entity within the Republic or in any other recognised way.

2. The Constitution may give expression to any particular form of self-determination provided there is substantial proven support within the community concerned for such a form of self-determination.
3. If a territorial entity referred to in paragraph 1 is established in terms of this Constitution before the new constitutional text is adopted, the new Constitution shall entrench the continuation of such territorial entity, including its structures, powers and functions.

[Constitutional Principle XXXIV added by s. 13 (b) of Act 2 of 1994.]

Annexure 4 – Representative list of Acts, White Papers and Green Papers relating to the new Public Service

Abolition of Public Administration Commission Act [No. 48 of 1997]
Abolition of Public Administration Commissions Bill [B71-97]
Amendment of Public Service Regulations, 1999 (Financial Disclosure by Heads of Departments and certain other employees) (Gazette 21021, Notice 310), 31 March 2000
Conference Report of the National Conference on Public Service Delivery, February 1997
Department of Communications Rationalisation Act [No.10 of 1998]
Department of Communications Rationalisation Bill [B32-98]
Discontinuance of forms Z27, Z3 and Z339 and amendment of form Z83 (Gazette 21590, Regulation Gazette 6885), 29 September 2000 (PDF)
Draft White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 9 May 1997
Executive Member's Ethics Bill [B64-98]
Green Paper on a Conceptual Framework for Affirmative Action and the Management of Diversity in the Public Service, 31 May 1997
Green Paper on a New Employment Policy for a New Public Service, 31 May 1997
Green Paper on Public Service Training and Education - March 1997
Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers (*comments by 24 November 2000*) (Gazette 21605, Notice 3962), 6 October 2000 (PDF)
Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-bearers Act [No. 92 of 1997]
Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-Bearers Bill [B112-97]
Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-Bearers Bill [B112A-97] (PC)
Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-Bearers Bill [B112B-97]
Presidential Review Commission Report, February 1998
Public Service Amendment Act [No. 5 of 1999]
Public Service Amendment Bill [B20-99]
Public Service Amendment Bill [B20A-99] (PC)
Public Service Amendment Bill [B20B-99]
Public Service Commission Act [No. 46 of 1997]
Public Service Commission Annual Report 1998 [*outside link*]
Public Service Commission Annual Report 1996
Public Service Commission Bill [B31A-97] (PC)
Public Service Commission Bill [B31B-97]
Public Service Commission Bill [B31C-97] (SC)
Public Service Commission Bill [B31D-97]
Public Service Laws Amendment Act [No.47 of 1997]
Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B62-98]
Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B62A-98]
Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B62AB-98]
Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B62C-98] (PC)
Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B62D-98]

Public Service Laws Second Amendment Bill [B111-97]
 Public Service Laws Second Amendment Act [No. 93 of 1997]
 Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B32A-97] (PC)
 Public Service Laws Amendment Bill [B32B-97]
 Public Service Regulations: Second Draft, 12 December 1997
 Public Service Wage Settlement 2000/2001, 28 September 2000
 Rationalisation of Public Administration under the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993: Replacement of Laws on Public Services (Government Gazette 15791, 3 June 1994)
 Remuneration of Persons Holding Public Office Bill, 1997 (Notice 1329 of 1997)
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act [No. 21 of 1998]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Amendment Act [No. 9 of 2000]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Amendment Bill [B11-2000]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Amendment Bill [B11D-2000]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16-98]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16A-98] (PC)
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16B-98]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16C-98] (SC)
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16D-98]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16E-98] (Amendments to)
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16F-98]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16G-98] (PC)
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Bill [B16H-98]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Second Amendment Act [No. 21 of 2000]
 Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Second Amendment Bill [B23-2000]
 Reporting by Public Entities Amendment Act [No. 30 of 1997]
 Resolutions of the National Anti-Corruption Summit, 14-15 April 1999
 Rules for dealing with complaints and grievances of officials in the Public Service (Gazette 20231, Regulation No 6575), 1 July 1999
 Salary and Benefit Negotiations 2000/2001, July 2000
 The Provincial Review Report - August 1997
 White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service - March 1998
 White Paper on a New Employment Policy for the Public Service (2nd Draft), - 8 October 1997
 White Paper on a New Employment Policy for the Public Service, September 1997
 White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, July 1998
 White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, July 1997
 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, September 1997
 Withdrawal of Public Service Staff Code and other prescripts relating to the Public Service (Gazette 20271), 1 July 1999.